

**SPECIAL
ISSUE!**

THE MAGAZINE OF CINEMA & TELEVISION FANTASY N°43 70p

STARBURST

STAR WARS

THE MAKING OF A SCIENCE-FANTASY CLASSIC
NEVER BEFORE PUBLISHED COLOUR PICTURES
PLUS BONUS POSTER



WE INTERVIEW STAR WARS/RAIDERS STAR

HARRISON FORD

AND FEATURES ON DRAGONSLAYER
SHOCK TREATMENT, HELL NIGHT,
THE UNSEEN AND SF POSTERS





DRAGONSLAYER

WE PRESENT A REVIEW OF THE NEW DISNEY/PARAMOUNT RELEASE, DRAGONSLAYER, BY REGULAR CONTRIBUTOR ALAN JONES, WHICH BEGINS ON PAGE 20.

STAR WARS

WITH A RE-RELEASE OF THE GEORGE LUCAS FANTASY EPIC, STAR WARS, SLEATED FOR THE SUMMER, WE GO BEHIND THE SCENES AND LOOK AT THE GENESIS OF THE MOVIE. SEE PAGE 22.



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Volume 4, Number 7

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THOUGH IT SEEMS LIKE ONLY YESTERDAY, IT
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CORMAN.

STARBURST LETTERS

ABOUT THIS ISSUE

As you will no doubt have realised, this issue's cover feature is on George Lucas's epic space fantasy, *Star Wars*. Phil Edwards and I have been talking about this feature for some time now. At the time the film was released (can it really be nearly five years ago?) most of the stills issue were merely scenes from the film. In the intervening years, many behind-the-scenes pictures have come to light. So many that we felt that the time might be right for a close examination of the making of the film. Couple this with the fact that Tony Crawley's Deauville interview with Harrison Ford, arrived in the post from France (where Tony now lives) and our *Star Wars* issue was ready to roll.

There will be changes coming to *Starburst* in the next few months. Changes we hope you will like. Only the spectre of ever-spilling costs hangs over us, though we hope to be able to stem a price rise for a while yet.

We hope you will all rush out and buy a copy of our latest venture, *cinema* (with a small c). It features all your favourite *Starburst* writers and few new names besides. The first regular monthly issue of *cinema* is scheduled for release April 7th 1982. And we can promise you a different kind of film magazine, with the same hard-hitting editorial style that has made *Starburst* the success it is.

Meanwhile, keep those letters rolling in.

Alan McKenzie,
Editor,
Starburst.

AN AMERICAN DIRECTOR IN STARBURST

I have just read John Brosnan's review of *An American Werewolf in London*.

As for "... people over 40 who don't like the ending," I actually know a number of people under 40 who didn't like the ending either.

Oh Well.

John Landis,
Universal City,
U.S.A.

A NOTE ON AMNESIA

Untold sympathies are really in order from myself to your correspondent Terry Gilliam (*Starburst* letters, issue 40). He does, as I remember, suffer from a spectral

affliction which indeed has plagued me for quite some time now. Amnesia. An appalling (if not sometimes attractive and delightfully eccentric) impediment. Many creative people down through the ages have been equipped with this aptitude, although Lovecraft believed it to be self-induced in some, though to what end I certainly cannot begin to imagine. I was about to write something else on this matter, but I cannot remember what, so it is probably just as well to forget. For all time.

Allow me to take this opportunity to wish all *Starburst* readers an extremely imaginative and fruitfully inventive New Year. Also, to the more visually orientated among you (and I am certain there are many) I would wish you to view the feature film we have just completed, *Dark Crystal*, which is simply an unending feast or originally artistic images, which I am sure you will revel in. Watch out for it.

Jon Sorenson,
Berks.

IT'S ONLY AN EGO TRIP

Any credit I previously graced John Brosnan's role as film critic with was quickly swept away with his ludicrous *Fantasy Females in Jeopardy* feature in *Starburst* 40. Actually, his intellect was already showing itself up as being non-existent—it's *Only A Movie* was becoming self-indulgent exercise into utter, naive stupidity. It's impossible to believe he actually gets paid money for writing this drivel.

The main reason for this angered missive, though, is due to his comments on *The Man Who Fell to Earth*. So his level of interest only extends to that of naked bodies?

Say John, I hear there's a great job going at *Penthouse*. Don't worry—you won't be called upon to think or attempt a rational review.

Your comments should be well at home there. OK, I happen to regard *TWTFE* as one of the best modern examples of true science fiction on celluloid.

People like Brosnan, who can't see any further than the ice cream ladies' legs, should confine their comments on films they don't have the facilities to comprehend.

This letter is a challenge to John Brosnan.

Let him tell us why he thinks *TWTFE* a terrible film...

And I'll tell him why he's wrong.
David Curvie,
Corsham,
Wilts.

John Brosnan replies (politely) "I'm a little confused by this letter. Having checked my *Fantasy Women in Jeopardy* article carefully, I can't find where I supposedly gave my opinion of *The Man Who Fell to Earth*. So here's a challenge to Mr Curvie, if he can tell me why he thinks I think it's a terrible film on the basis of what I said in that article, then I will send him a free, autographed copy of *Future Tense*, my book on science fiction films, which actually does include my thoughts about the movie."



Clockwise from below: Jon Sorenson, John Landis. A scene from *An American Werewolf in London*. A scene from *The Time Bandits*. Opposite page: *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.*



Please send all comments and criticisms to:
 Starburst Letters, Starburst Magazine,
 Marvel Comics Ltd, Jadwin House,
 205-211 Kentish Town Road,
 London, NW5, United Kingdom.

THE MEN FROM U.N.C.L.E.

In your recent *The Man From U.N.C.L.E.* article (*Starburst* 40) you missed one important point.

Made in the days of hope of the sixties, it showed Russians, Americans and others working together from international law and order. Although U.N.C.L.E. did operate against corrupt governments, both left and right by implication, its main enemy was THRUSH, best described as a multi-national company. Many of the villains were American, not foreign, and many owners of large corporations; the show was not merely anti-communist dressed up. U.N.C.L.E. was said to work behind the Iron Curtain sometimes with and sometimes without the assistance of communist regimes.

An episode shown recently on BBC showed how crisp and fresh the series still is, far better than most contemporary adventure series, with a lot more humour. I am not surprised there have been, and there are, plans to bring the series back. Even the sleep dart guns would fit in nicely with today's stricter US tv violence code.

D. Hughes,
 Worthing,
 Sussex.

AN AMICUS FILM?

Starburst 41 was one of your best yet. The poster galleries are an excellent idea. How about Hammer and Amicus galleries?

I was especially pleased to see the first part of an Amicus history. Please keep us informed of the book's publication. The filmography



raised a question. Freddie Francis *Tales that Witness Madness* (1973) is listed in Halliwell's *Film Guide* as an Amicus production, but was not in your filmography. Is this an Amicus Film or is it connected with Amicus?

Andrew McVicar,
 Glasgow,
 Scotland.

Ah, looks like the esteemed Mr Halliwell has slipped up again. *Again! Tales that Witness Madness* is not an Amicus film. The only connection we can see is that Freddie Francis directed many films for Amicus. But that does not mean, Leslie, that every Freddie Francis film is an Amicus production (gasps of amazement from Golden Square). Actually, we think it would be a good idea for *Starburst* readers to help compile a list of errors from Halliwell's *Film Guide* and *Filmgoer's Companion*. There are plenty. The listing of *The Thief of Baghdad* doesn't count as we mentioned that in *Starburst* 39. But just to get you started... The complete Roger Corman filmography (in Com-

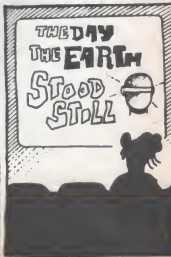
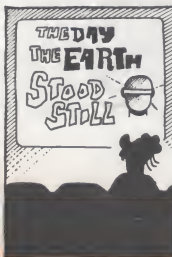
panion), denoted by the symbol omits *Dementia 13*, *Dunwich Horror*, and *Monster from the Ocean Floor* (and probably a couple of others, too). We look forward to your letters...

We regret that we cannot enter into correspondence with individual readers. There just aren't enough hours in the day!

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FLICKERS BY TIM QUINN & DICKY HOWETT



THINGS TO COME

FANTASY '82

So what, I hear you cry, yell, shout, ask and sometimes scribble in your letters (for which many thanks), does the new year of fantasy fandom hold for us? Well, we know well enough about the obvious answers. **Jedi. Superman III. Star Trek II. Ridley's Blade Runner. Romero 'n' King's Creepshow.** John's new thing. And the mighty Milos' **Conan**.

That would appear to be enough for any year. But there's more. Films of Asimov, Bradbury and Harbert. Plus: Richard Matheson has lately completed his scenario for, yes, indeed, **Jaws III**... the return (straight this time) of **Batman**... John Landis is promising **Dick Tracy**... and Universal's producer for 31 years, Jennings Lang, finally goes solo with, what else but, **Airport IV**.

But just to stop you smiling, we're also due to be invaded by **Death Wish II**, **Grease II** and **The Shining II**. Then again, you've got to have some rubbish in life, to help you appreciate the goodies. Good, bad, middling or indifferent, you can rely on one thing—you'll (hopefully) read about it here first. Have a good year....

STAR WARS ON TV

The auction is over and America's CBS tv network won the day in buying **Star Wars** for the transatlantic tube. But **Star Wars** only... As surmised by this column last month when ravauling the shock news that 20th Century-Fox put both Luke Skywalker movies up for tv sale, George Lucas yelled foul—and refused point-blank to let **The Empire Strikes Back** be part of any such package. George's word is law on **Empire**, because he, or Lucasfilm—and that's most certainly he!—owns it all, unlike the first film which is the jewel in the Fox crown.

Dr was it until tarnishing its future with the tv sale. Once CBS are free to transmit the movie, Fox could kiss off any more ra-issues, let alone videocassette sales. Who's going to buy a cassette when all America can take it in the not-too-distant future—beamed, no doubt, amid a record-breaking clutch of those abysmal American apologies for commercials?

In the end, it was not the Fox studio that got a bargain, but the tv network. Fox had been asking as much as 20 million dollars for the rights to screen the world's most successful movie—once only! Far too high, said all three US networks. ABC, in particular, gave up when figuring out how much (or indeed, how little) revenue a single screening would net 'em CBS, however, talked turkey and wound up paying an estimated 25 million bucks—**for three** airings dates. CBS, as ABC was first to point out, still won't make a robotic farting on the deal... except all the kudos for wiping out the other two networks, and their ads, on those nights.

George Lucas was reportedly furious about the entire Fox move. Seems the

first he heard about it was reading it in the trade papers. As usual, he made no public statement. Nor, for that matter, did the CBS president Bud Grant, or Harris Katleman, chairman of Fox TV. (though what the hell Fox TV had to do with a Fox Film Corp sale I'm not sure...) Lucasman Sidney Ganis did speak, though... and I more or less wrote his script in my own incensed outburst last month.

"If it were up to Lucasfilm," said Sid, "we wouldn't sell **Star Wars** to tv. It's a mistake, when there is considerable theatrical life in the film. And that's why Lucasfilm will not sell the tv rights of **The Empire Strikes Back** or **Revenge of the Jedi**." Eat your heart out, CBS.

As to who might eventually buy the movie for the British box—because Fox obviously won't stop with America—surely ITV only has the necessary kind of raadies. Even with the new licence deal, it's doubtful whether Auntie could scratch enough scratch together. Besides, ITV is still smarting over being gloriously bluffed out of the big Christmas film ratings games by the Beeb's adroit sacracy about their **Gone With The Wind** screening date. ITV went revenge!

Not being privy to the fine print in the Fox-CBS deal, I'm not sure if Fox has kept itself free to re-issue **Star Wars** whenever it wants. Heving seen the way the US networks run a classic movie—with nauseating commercials about every other close-up—I can

assure George Lucas that there will be life in the old galaxy at the cinema box-office yet. Some films work better on tv; usually the worst ones. The real biggies suffer from the smaller screen and non-stereo sound. Yeah, I think it's a safe bet that **Star Wars** will still pull in the crowds... and the day 20th Century-Fox seems to be hungry for more money, no doubt they've an escape clause in that deal to do just that any time they fail the need.

JEDI BEGINS

What's all this editorial comment that **Revenge of the Jedi** is now **The Return of the Jedi**...? First I've heard of it. Anyway, whatever it's called, episode 6 of George's on-going-nine-chapter serial started shooting back in its old home base of Elstree-EMI studios on Monday January 11. Stars? Who else but Mark 'n' Carrie 'n' Harrison 'n' Billy Dee Williams. Produced this time around by Howard Kazanjian, directed by Richard Marquand and costing 25 million dollars. That's three mill' more than **Empire**... and nearly three times the nine million price-tag on **Star Wars** itself.

(Editor's note: The rumour about the title change to **Return of the Jedi** came to our attention a couple of months ago. Naturally, we checked the information with the London Lucasfilm office. It was the first they'd heard of it too. We thought no more of it. Now, in the

American film magazines, we see the film is still being referred to as **Return**. We're still unclear about what the final title will be. But there's usually no smoke without, etc...)

TRUMBULL STOPS

As of Press time, I cannot report the fate of Doug Trumbull's long anticipated second movie, **Brainstorm**—suspended by MGM following the accidental death of its leading lady, Natalie Wood, on November 29. She had completed all but five days of her work on the movie, when taking off to Catalina for the weekend with husband Robert Wagner on their motor yacht, *Splendour* (named after one of Natalie Wood's movies, *Splendour in the Grass*). Also along for the weekend, was Natalie's co-star in the *Brainstorm* movie, Christopher Walken.

Suggestions that the film will not only be suspended, but stopped altogether and junked are just so much junk. Even given the sensitivity of the tragic news, MGM will hardly write off its hefty investment in the movie. What will probably be junked are the actress's scenes. These will presumably be reshoot with another actress, or Trumbull might be able to find some way of using a double for Natalie Wood's remaining scenes—giving her dialogue to another character and shooting the Natalie personae from the back, say.

A new actress and re-shooting are more like it though, and the speculation that Wagner's tv co-star, Stefanie Powers, will take over the role is, I'm sure, just more junk. As a pal of the Wagners, and indeed the last lover of the other recent Hollywood drink victim, William Holden, Stefanie is too broken up to take on such a role. Despite the fact she's just got married, I think the role will go to Hollywood's standard replacement for a star they can't get, or use any more—Susan Saint James. But not for a month or so. By the time you read this, you'll have read the news alongside the Page Thraa girl.

DUNE SOON?

Struck down by all manner of problems every time it's announced, the long-promised Hollywood film of Frank Herbert's **Dune** books is finally adging closer to the screen. In years gone by, such people as Alexander Jodorowsky, Dan O'Bannon, and H.R. Giger were due to make the film. Then, Ridley Scott was announced as director—with Herbert scripting. My latest news is that **The Elephant Man** team of director David Lynch and writers Chris DeVore and Eric Bergen have it just about ready to go at Universal. I'll believe it when shooting begins...

STAR FLAWS

Not a lot is going right with Paramount's heavily special-effects tv show, **The Powers of Matthew Star**. This is the one known around Tellywood as **Son of Bionic Man**. (It's from the same com-



Compiled by Tony Crawley

peny, Herve Bennett Productions, if for a different studio). Shooting began on time, but wouldn't you know it, the effects held things up. So instead of debuting in December, the series got switched a month. And then they burnt their star and that put everything further back.

Peter Barton plays the **Star** character. During the shooting of one episode, guest-starring **Roots** man, Louis Gossett Jr., both men were badly burned by a magnesium flare when our trusty hero was freeing Gossett from his bonds. Gossett got off best with first-degree burns on both hands and the back of his head and was soon out of dock. But poor Barton suffered third-degree burns over the lower section of his body and was still in the burns ward of the Sherman Daks Hospital when we went to Press. His condition was described as "satisfactory".

FIRST TAKES

New faces among the **Star Trek II** team include the wondrously named Merritt Buttrick and Kristie Alley, and the wondrously framed Bibi Besch. Sybil Denning fans please note: the blonde of '81 headlines **Julie Darling**, a West Germany-Canadian co-production with Tony Franciosa. He's a lot to have to suffer just to see Sybil in action again. And beware, Farrah Fawcett is headed back, like ex-hubby Lee, where they belong—TV seriesland. Sir Alec Guinness plays Freud in **Valium**. May the source go with him. Andy Warhol's alter-ego, the ubiquitous Paul Morrissey returns to Italy, land of his **Dracula** and **Frankenstein** films, to helm **Sunday Killers** with Marcello Mastroianni and Sydney Rome (she's a gal—and how!).

INFLUENCED?

Remember an actor name of Bob Belaban? He probably first caught your attention as Francois Truffaut's interpreter in Spielberg's **Close Encounters**. He also published his diary of the shooting. More recently, he was one of Bill Hurt's moderators during those **Altered States** experiments and away from our kind of movies, he's also found time to direct his first picture. His wife, Lynn Grossman wrote it—all 20 minutes of it. Bob got his **Close Encounters** mate, Richard Dreyfuss, to star in it, along with **Ragtime**'s Mandy Patinkin. The result is called—what else?—**SPFX 1140**. Very Lucasbergian!

UNIVERSAL TOUR II

If you can't afford to Laker it to Los Angeles to join the millions being scared out of their tourist buses by Bruce the shark on the Universal Studio tour—relax. The mountain is coming to Mohammed. Universal Tours is spreading its wings. A 60-acre clone of the LA trip is being built alongside Disneyworld, Sea World and Circus World in Orlando, Florida. . . and other sites are

being negotiated in Japan and South America.

The Florida plan is bigger than a clone. The tour is part of a 170 million dollar Universal City-Florida project covering 423 acres in all. The tourist section will have 22 movie streets, including an Oklahoma oil field, the Alps, no less, and a double of Hollywood Hills. Plus all the old faithfuls like the stunting show, screen tests, the **Psycho** house, collapsing bridges, avalanches, King Kong, a detailed rollercoaster, the inevitable earthquake and, but of course, the parting of the Red Sea. Plus four new sound-stages which, so far, look like being used more for tourist fare than actual movies, although by the time this new tourist trap is ready for its four million shutter-bugs a year, I think it safe to assume that Universal-MCA will have dreamt up at least a couple of TV series set in Florida to add the necessary film-making reality to the site. The writers must be at work now, with the same deadline as the builders.

Movies have been made in or near Orlando before, even though the local favourite son, Burt Reynolds, had to pull his **Mean Machine** out of there because of lack of co-operation. Universal, in fact, was first attracted to the area by the lakes that will surround their new site. Or rather, the swamps next to the lakes. That was way back in 1954 for **Creature From The Black Lagoon**. The sequel, **Revenge of the Creature** (one of Clint Eastwood's earliest wack-ons), was shot at the nearby Silver Springs, which had previously seen jungle service for many of Johnny Weismuller's Tarzan capers.

Apart from Burt, another local boy made good in movies. He was the guy inside the **Creature** suit—the only man around, apparently, who could go underwater in it, without drowning. His name? Ricou Browning. He later created the **Flipper** TV series and apologised for that by supplying all the underwater work on 007's **Thunderball** movie.

Note: Disneyworld still remains the world's No 1 tourist spot, with Disneyland in Anaheim, second, and the LA Universal tour third. Doesn't say a lot for London, Paris, Rome, Venice, does it. . .

SECOND TAKES

Columbia's less-than-brilliant TV series, **Mr. Merlin**, which re-situates Camelot's wizard in a Yenkee garage, has won enough points to go to a full series. Hmm, that's useful for any less-than-brilliant series idea in America. I'm hoping for something rather better in Vegas man Bob Urich's new series, **Gavalan**. His writers include the Bond and Superman scribe, Tom Mankiewicz. . . **Mad Max** star Mel Gibson, now a down-under hotshot since **Gallipoli**, taking a stage sabbatical in Sydney with **Shorts I and II**, a collection of six plays with his King O'Malley theatre group. Mel's in five of 'em. His next movie? Peter Weir's **The Year of Living Dangerously** . . .



FOOD FOR . . .

A new science fiction movie has opened in France. I think. It's all about this cuddly, not to say fat extra-terrestrial alien invading the lives of a couple of old, very old Frenchmen. One of them is the biggest comedy star in France: Louis de Funès by name. This sf rubbish is called . . . I kid you not. **Cabbage Soup!**

MONEY FOR . . .

. . . old rope. Very old rope. Sean Cunningham, director of that flea-bite of a movie, **Friday The 13th**, is now a multi-millionaire because of it. He's not quite in the Lucas class, but he's just rolling in the greenstuff—and typed, he complains, is a horror film-maker. (Horrible, is more like it). The figures are more impressive than the movie. Costing a mere 506,000 dollars, the movie has earned about 44 million. The sequel, which Sean wisely did not touch, has made another 22 million, of which (like any more in the dumb series), Cunningham has ten per cent. Having lately shot **A Stranger Is Watching** for 3.5 million of MGM's money, Sean Cunningham is now investing some of his loot in off-Broadway plays, and looking for a musical to film. Until one turns up, he's planned an adolescent comedy, **Vision Quest**—and I thought **Friday** was an adolescent comedy!—and a Western, no less, called **Road Show**. In short, he's out to change his image. Looks like he can afford to.

KASDAN II

As if one Kasdan writer was not enough to have film scribes puce with envy after **Empire**, **Raiders** and **Bodyheat**, Larry has followed Paul Schrader's lead and got his brother into the act. **Les Freres Kasdan**, Larry and Mark, have sold their first joint script, **Bodyguard**, to 20th Century-Fox. It's part of the studios' new production slate of the movies costing, altogether, a mere 135 million bucks . . .

BREAK A LEG!

As Burt Reynolds' stuntman or director, Hal Needham never asked a stuntor to do anything he couldn't do. While shooting his sf trip, **Megaforce** in the Vegas desert the other week, Hal fractured three ribs and smashed his head about. He went into something of a teilsip on his motorbike—and not, as some wags suggested, his trolley. Strapped up, he was back megaforging next day.

KERSH NIXES ROBOTS

Enough with robots, already. . . I Irvin Kershner, the **Empire Strikes Back** director, has quit the Warner Brothers' plans for Isaac Asimov's **I, Robot**. He's too tied up with the feast of offers **Empire's** success flooded his agent with. He has three films on his schedule for '82/3—**The Ninja**, which has been so long postponed I doubt it'll ever get going; **Man Fate**, likewise I'm sure; and **Fools Die**. Succeeding Kersh on the Asimov film is Ted Kotcheff. Hardly a name to engender much interest. . . although his new film, pitting Sylvester Stallone against old Kirk Douglas, **First Blood**, might improve his track record. William, Theodore Kotcheff is Canadian by birth and TV training. British by early film successes. But apart from launching Richard Dreyfuss as a star in **The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz** (1974) and helming the **Fun with Dick and Jane** adventure of Jane Fonda and George Segal (1977), his movie career has been pretty dismal. It's bad enough that the likes of Harlan Ellison has scripted the Asimov classic to start with. . . oh c'mon Warners, there has to be someone better to direct such a classic yarn. How about John Sayles? How about Herley Coklis? How about John Brosnan? Anyone!

RADIOWEEN

Just as **Halloween II** opened at

THINGS TO COME

Halloween, when also?—American radio join the spooky act with NBC's first live network radio drama in twenty years. The hour-long creepy piece was called **A Halloween Show** and went out live from the Magic Castle in Hollywood, coast-to-coast without caring a jot for the diffing time zones. John Houseman led the story-telling session, which led into three separate tales. Others in the play(s) included Lynn Redgrave and her husband John Clark (a one-time *Just William* on British tv), and John Carradine. The actors and the crew gava their fees to the United Nations Children's Fund. The show went down so well, NBC are thinking of continuing live drama on radio. Another blow against tv!

WATCHING ANEW

Well, they've re-done it at the cost of a million smackers, crossed their fingers and put it out again with a revised ad hype... and a back-up co-feature for the second week if it still doesn't stand up. **Heaven's Gate?** No, no, that's a dead duck by now. I'm referring to Disney's **Watcher in the Woods**. Johnny Hough's British-made ghost-suspenser with Bette Davies, David McCallum, Carroll Baker and the lovely Lynn Holly Johnson, flopped badly first time out. The ending was very airy-fairy and the pivot of the film's scare factor, the creature known as The Watcher, was an almighty letdown in this day and age of Carlo Rambaldi magic. "It looked," according to one New York critic, "as if it had been stolen from a Chinese New Year's parade."

Rather than junk nine million dollars, the film went back to the Disney drawingboards. Once he'd finished work on **The Empire Strikes Back**, Harrison Ellenshaw, son of Patar, was called in to doctor **The Watcher**. He

chewed the fat with Disney's production chief, Ron Miller and the film's co-producer Tom Leetch. "We agreed that the special effects weren't working," reports Harrison. "The end did not resolve the story. My idea was to simplify it... easier said than done."

While cast and crew reassembled at Pinewood to re-shoot certain scenes, Ellenshaw got to work on the Disney lost in California... and argued about the costs. He says did the job for under a million. Disney publicity states in excess of a million. They've hardly fallen out. Ellenshaw is now working on the new sf project at Disney, **Trojan**.

"I'm pleased with the new **Watcher**. It's a big improvement. We now have what they meant to have—a provocative ghost story." And the ad campaign to match it. The tag last time around was "A masterpiece of suspense." The new copy reads: "It was just an innocent game until a young girl vanished... for 30 years." And where that didn't work, **Watcher in the Woods** was quickly double-billed with another of the latest and long line of Disney flops, **The Devil and Max Devlin**.

TWILIGHT GALLERY

Deep down, real deep, we all still miss Rod Sterling, right? Right! I mean even those of us too young to have watched **Twilight Zone** (1959-64) and **Night Gallery** (1970-72) late at night have heard about them and miss these great tele-fantasies. Well, they're back. Kind of. In a new Universal series, with a new title, **Darkroom**, a new host, James Coburn, otherwise the format is as before. Two stories a week... or, for as long as the bone-heads in the Black Tower continue picking up the tab once the fledgling series, on ABC in the States, flounders as it must against the

CBS time-slot rival, a little thing entitled **Dallas**.

With luck, ABC will switch times and give the new show a chance to get rooted. Coburn makes a good host, and so far, the opening twosome at least, the tals are keeping monsters in their cages and going for well-written, plotted, acted and directed suspensers with a genuine sting in the tail, and much more so than Roald Dahl's efforts!

As with the Sterling series, Universal is giving the writing and directing jobs to new boys (and girls) wherever possible. Paul Lynch, of **Prom Night** fame (?), handled **Stay Tuned, We'll Be Right Back**, in which Lawrence Pressman started picking up 1942 Nazi radio signals in 1981... and Rick Rosenthal, producer Debra Hill's choice as director for **Halloween II**, helmed **The Myrmidon Project**... I'm sorry, **Close Circuit**!

NIGHT ZONE

Christopher Lee is the less imaginative host of another tv bunch of 'classic twisted tales' in the new American cablisation series, **The Human Sanctuary**. In all, there's already 26 of these shows already made, featuring tales by Poe, Tolstol, Boccaccio, Dumas and Wilde. "Stones as timeless as fear itself," runs the Comworld International hype, "26 half-hours of macabre fun." I think I'll stay in the **Darkroom**, myself.

RE-ANIMATING DISNEY

After Don Bluth and all these young animators upped and left the Disney studio three years ago, the home of Mickey Mouse and Co was short, very short, very short of young blood. The famous "Nine Old Men" as Disney called his star artists, couldn't do everything themselves. Hence, the inauguration—better late than never, of the Disney School of Animation. For the opening session, fourteen young artists were hired, paid a special trainee rate and had eight weeks of classes from various greats, including the last of the Nine Old Men still on the Disney payroll, Eric Larson. His credits date back to that first full Disney cartoon feature, **Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs** (1937).

The best of that opening term were then hired and began work on the next cartoon release, **The Black Cauldron**, plus the Christmas '82 special, **Mickey's Christmas Carol**. The school will continue like this in an effort to help double the studio's cartoon output. As of now, the studio has 135 animators on their books, plus the new students (most of whom seemed to pass muster). Disney's plan is to produce an animated feature every other year. And that takes time. And people. Each feature means four years work.

"I don't know why it took us so long to get around to establishing a programme like this," says Eric Larson. "We didn't get frightened about the future until around 1970. Even after Walt died in 1966, it didn't dawn on us that



the same people wouldn't keep on working forever."

The new signings will, no doubt, be kept a close watch on. Disney can't have another Don Bluth-like defection of newly trained talent.

MARK'S SECRET

There's been a sudden, surprise and top secret addition to the very British cast of the very Britain-in-microcosm satire, **Britannia Hospital**, being shot by Lindsay Anderson at Lee International studios. Mark Hamill, no less. He flew in to replace an absent Treat Williams (Anderson's first choice from **Hair**, 1941 and **Prince of the City**). His role? A stoned tv technician working with reporter Malcolm McDowell who's playing his **W** and **Oh Lucky Man** character of Mick Travis again. Black comedy or no, Mark still finds himself tied up with special effects. At one point in some riotous proceedings, he's dragged through the windshield of his tv-truck by a raging mob.

His fee, by the way, is zisch. Mark's doing the film for expenses only. Well, he is a millionaire already...

PARIS SF AWARDS

When the films are much good, nor are the awards. Such is the only comment about the 11th Paris Science Fiction and Fantastique festival. You can take the sf label with a pinch or two of garlic. The public can buy tickets to the films this event unfurls, and they much prefer horror over any form of science fantasy, which explains why Israel's **Message**



THINGS TO COME



From The Future (Starburst 39) wasn't even considered for the festival.

George Millar's **Mad Max**, which is as close to sf or fantastique as **Nine To Five**, copped the top trophy... nearly two years after getting the jury nod at the rather more selective Avoriaz fest also French, and also sf end fantasy. This time the film opened in Paris, afterwards. It had been banned before (despite distributors' cuts) because of violent sex, not banned, exactly, given a X-rating, the same as porno. The new Socialist regime's Culture Minister, Jack Lang, squashed the X recently as part of his fraer form of censorship.

The jury end critics' prizes both went to William Sachs' **Galaxina**, which the French seemed to think was a straight film, and not a send-up that didn't work. Both awards carried a "special thought" for **Galaxina** herself, the late Dorothy Stratten. Karen Arthur picked up the script honours for **The Mafu Cage**, which I saw at Cannes oh... three... four years ago and didn't think very much of at the time. **Mother's Day**, directed by Charlie Kaufman in New York was considered worthy of a Black Humour citation. David Hemmings' pretty good down-under thriller, **The Survivor**, won a prize for its... music! Best Actress was Deborah Banson in Jeff Lieberman's **Survivance (or Just Before Dawn to you)**. If her prize is money, I trust she spends it as drama school. Unless I've lost my notes, no one was Best Actor, although Vincent Price was given a special accolade (like most of the other award-winners) for simply turning up.

One cannot accept this Paris event as a serious festival at all. It's a good idea, inasmuch as it lets the public in to a bunch of more or less genre movies, most of which are about to open anyway, the rest of which may win a release deal after proving themselves with the tough audiences at the Grand Rex cinema. (They loved **Mad Max**!) But awards—forget it. Call it what it is, a sf and fantasy week—but not a festival, *ca va*?

FUNERAL

One film missing from the Paris fest end could have done with some Euro-exposure, was **The Hearse**—reviewed in **Starburst 27**. After a dismal run in America, it looks as if Trish Van Devera's second horror picture (her first was **The Changeling** with hubby George C. Scott) will wind up as a quick tv sale. "It wasn't strong enough for the market place," comments producer Mark Tenser. "We didn't chop off arms. There wasn't enough blood." Well, no wonder the Paris event didn't want it...

SON OF CORMAN

That which jolly Roger Corman began in the 60s, Peter Bogdanovich—one of the many helped by Corman—is vowing to continue into the 80s. The critic-turned-director has now become a distributor as well, in order to save his comedy, **They All Laughed** (Dorothy Stratten's last film), from the shaft. But he also aims for his Moon Pictures combo to give breaks to new talent. He'll pick the

projects, at no more than four million dollars each, direct some himself, and pass on others to people who've caught his eye in film schools and the like. So far the only new talent he's talking of is documentary maker Martha Coolidge, while he's keeping upwards of four scripts for himself. These include **I'll Remember April**, a ghost number set in Paris and **The White Lady**, based on Robert Graves's **Watch The North Wind**. "This will be," says Bogdanovich, "the least expensive science fiction film since Roger Corman stopped making them."

The director-cum-entrepreneur is also talking animation—with a series of half-hour cartoons aimed at cablevision or video cassettes, based on another Robert Graves work, **Tales of the White Goddess**.

I wish him well, but I can't help recalling that exactly ten years ago, Bogdanovich, Coppola and Billy Friedkin, all hotter than hot directors of the hour, formed a caucus called The Directors' Company... end not a lot happened. Better luck this time!

ITC SINKS

Lord Lew Grade's ITC Films International has gone. Not sold. Just wound up. In a word: Kaput! It could be that this time next month, I'll be reporting the Grade's Classic cinema chain has gone as well—sold, this time. In order to keep in movie production at all, Lord Lew has had to sell many assets, including the Beatles' music company, and entered into a releasing deal with Universal and cut his once lofty pro-

duction to a mere three movies a year. Sad to see any film-making venture fail, but hell, Lord Lew got what he asked for. He thought filmgoers were like his ATV viewers—suckers. Hence the kind of mealy-mouth drivel he somehow talked big name stars to appear in and die in, time after time at the box-office. You'll remember (wince, wince) **Saturn Three**...

BETTER TELLY

Not all American tv is rotten. Forget the three big networks (soon to be small, dead and no doubt gone by the end of the 80s with all the satellite and cassette vision) and try a PBS show. That's Public Broadcasting Service, and it's standards are as high as the Beeb on a good day. I expect either Auntie or Channel Four to be vying for the latest PBS **American Playhouse** bunch of 25 plays. I hope so, anyway. They include Kurt Vonnegut's **Who Am I This Time?**, co-starring Susan Sarandon and Christopher Walken—and Ray Bradbury's **Any Friend of Nicholas Nickleby's Is A Friend of Mine**, featuring dear old Fred Gwynne—Herman Munster that was. PBS sounds better than the doings of the Ewings, hmm?

PIRATE TELLY

Add a new tv foe for the mighty networks of the world—pirate tv ships! Yeah, just like the old Radio Caroline days. Only words and pictures this time. It's been happening in Israel where Tel Aviv viewers can pick up the signal of the good ship **Odalia** beaming out such venerable classics as **The Sound of Music**—**Superman** and **Raiders**, too!

VIDEOTIC TELLY

After the Christmas spurge of hardware gifts, and the rush to pick up some software, it's safe to assume that the video blitz in Britain is going to start evening out. Maybe even falling right out of favour. That's not only my view from the fence, but that of Intervention's chief, Michael Tenser. Too much material has been bought by the muddling number of video companies, he says, and it's ridiculous prices. At Italy's Mifed film event, he heard people offering up to £30,000 dollars for the rights of a film for the British market—which just isn't that big, despite what all the vid-megs seem to tell us.

"We're all to blame," says Tenser, meaning the companies not the vid-fans. "We bring out too much. There are no planned releases. Everyone's fighting for shelf space and dealers are sitting on up to a thousand titles. The industry has got to get together to restrict releases." Or else—bingo, that's the end of the vid game.

DISC TELLY

Any dealer with all those titles on their shelves will certainly catch a cold once the video-disc begins making inroads

THINGS TO COME

over here. The quality of picture is better on disc. As RCA rule the roost in this area (for now), you don't always get all of the picture... For example, the RCA disc now has Brian De Palma's *Dressed to Kill* on offer. But they've cut out most of the bloodier scenes... while you can get the full cinema version on the Warner Brothers tape. No wonder discs are cheaper. There's less of the film on them!

MEANWHILE, IN COURT...

It's not only the biggie movies like *Raiders* which bring the writers and their lawyers out of the woodwork. Group One's little horror flick, *Alligator* (1980) has turned into a case of: Saa you later, alligator—in court! A couple of Los Angeles writs are suing producers Brandon Chase and Joseph Maginane and the hot new scriptwriter John Sayles (*Battle Beyond The Stars*, *Return of the Secaucus Seven*) for breach of implied contract, whatever that is. Surely, a contract cannot be implied, it has to be written. But that's the case of David Weinstein and Wehld Bactor (two names to conjure with). They claim the movie was based on two of their previous numbers and they want a total of 700,000 dollars for their pains. The figure includes 300,000 because, they say, the *Alligator* movie was made 'in a tasteless and inappropriate manner.' I like their gall! If I could sue for 300,000 smackers for every film I've seen made in a tasteless and inappropriate manner I could buy a share in Alan McKenzia.

It's en odd suit for damages when you

learn that the writer's allegedly purloined ideas were called *Jaws Three—Network Two* and *See You Later, Alligator*. Personally, I reckon the judge will respond with... in a while, crocodiles.

A very short while, in fact. A terrible Thailand-made copy-*Jaws* called *Crocodile* has lately surfaced on US screens. Directed by one Somptose Sands, made up as it went along, I'm sure, it features an actor called Tiny Tim... who'd bring out the Scrooge in anyone. The film is unspeakably awful.

R.I.P.

Aged 74, Jack Albertson, one of the stars of Dan O'Bannon's *Dead and Buried* film, had died of cancer at his Hollywood Hills home. And there I was running the old fall down a couple of issues ago with my raving, wishing Harry Jones had been in the role instead. Well, that's still my view. Apart from a couple of tele-movies, including *The Lilac Season* with Vanessa Redgrave, *Dead and Buried* was Albertson's last movie. Ironically, his role was an undertaker. Also lately dead, at 83, the Austrian actress, singer and widow of composer Kurt Weill, Lotte Lenya, better known (despite all her Berlin work with Weill and Bertolt Brecht) as the thoroughly nesty Rosa Krabb villainess in *From Russia With Love*.

FIRST WORD

Although it pulled in mucho money at the box-office in America—or it did until *Time Bandits* came out—*Halloween II*

is just not a patch on the original. It starts where I left off, with Donald Pleasence plugging The Shape full of at least six holes. That's enough to have Jamie Lee Curtis carted off to hospital in shock. But not enough—hol hol—to stop The Shape (Dick Werlock). He survives all and proceeds to behave as if he's on holiday from the Friday The 13th summer camp. He slashes at anything that moves. To watch this film, the debut of new director Rick Rosenthal (he's far better with his *Darkroom* tv work), it's simply unbelievable that it stems from the same team as the original. Rosenthal examines each end every successive murder like a pathologist, instead of like Carpenter, a filmmaker. Bed news.

Not a lot to be said for Julie Coman's spoof, *Saturday The 14th*, either. It's only success is in beating *Thursday The 12th* to the movie-houses. Written and directed by Howard R. Cohen, it probably seemed a cute idea at the time—1954? Richard Benjamin and Paule Prentiss, the real-life marrieds, inherit an Amityville-type house and for 75 unfunny minutes are beset by everything left in the Cornman props room. Vampires, ghosts, aliens and that looks like the brother and sister of the creature from the black lagoon. A sad miss from Roger Cornman's producer wife. Not more than one real laugh in the whole clambake.

Chances are you might find something to enjoy (and plenty to write angry letters to me about) in both of these movies. Not in *Demonoid*, though. I think I'm on mail-free ground in denouncing this piece of tripe, originally called *Macabre*, and made down in Mexico way in 1979. It's something of another *Hand movie*, thankfully minus Mike Caine, but not necessarily improved upon by having Samantha Eggar screaming as a disenfranchised hand creeps up her leg and begins squeezing her friend's faces until the pips shoot out. Producer Alfred Zacharias directed his own story, so there's no one else to blame for the mess. I mean, what can you expect from a movie that casts Stuart Whitman as a priest. *Stu Whitman!*

Michael Crichton's *Looker* is better. Tain't perfect. Not by a long chalk, and seems, at times, a slightly readjusted re-run of his *Coma* film, which is a touch naughty, as Crichton didn't write *Coma*. Robin Cook did. There's also a lot of *Stepford Wives* here, plus Crichton's *Westworld*... Instead of perfectly healthy bodies kept comatose while their spare parts are auctioned off the highest (ill) bidder, *Looker* has models galore knocked off and replaced by James Coburn's plastic surgery computerised simulations. (Don't ask; it is muddling). Coburn is also into hypnotic rather than old-fashioned subliminal messages in the commercials he makes with his models. Albert Finney continues his Hollywood adventures (after *Wolfe*) as the plastic surgeon sought for the murder. Susan Dey, remembered by some from tv's *Partridge Family*, is his help-mate, a

real looker. So are most of the women on view, from Leigh Taylor-Young (and lovely) in a rip-off of Elisabeth Ashley's *Coma* role, and a bevy of *Playboy* Playmates. Best of touch is a light-pulse gun. This doesn't kill, but helps you to. Slowly the victim is put into a trance and whoever carries the gun is immediately inchoerative... Like I said, it is muddling. Or did I fall asleep in the middle? Again.

Finally, there's some more attempts at comedy-horror coming your way (sorry about that). *The Worm Eaters* (who's kidding?) is written, directed by end stars Herb Robins in 1977 when he thought he was Mel Brooks... Striking back at a real estate scheme swallowing up his property, our Herb, a worm breeder no less, begins turning people into human worms. The special effects in these scenes resemble the Middle Wallop Women's Institute production of *Miranda*, *The Mermaid*. What else can I say? Oh Herb sings to his worms, dences with one called Bertha, he gets run over by a truck at the finish and like almost everyone else in the thoroughly bad taste movie, he eats worms. On camera. Paste the vomit-bag, please.

Where *Friday the 14th* fails, *The Creature Wasn't Nice* almost makes it. Bruce Kimmel, writes and directs this often glorious satire of the things-from-outerspace-up-there-far-way trips. It starts the usual way—a spaceship lands on a distant star, picks up some, er, stuff, takes off end the, ar, stuff grows end grows and, well, hello Monster, howya doin'. Stuck with the resultant mess on board their craft are the director himself; Cindy Williams from tv's *Laverne and Shirley* (what these tv stars get up to in their hiatus periods!); Patrick MacNee as a mad scientist, one or two steps removed from his *Howling* character; and still very much in his *Airplane* mould, the splendid Leslie Nielsen as their idiot commander. Yes, for all its faults, I liked this 'un.

SCALA PREMIERE

A word to the wise... London's Scala Cinema is to premiere the superior Australian psychological thriller *Patrick* on Friday February 19th 1982. Unfortunately, the film does not use the soundtrack score composed by the rock band Goblin that was used on the Italian version. Nevertheless, the film is well worth the visit if you are within striking distance of the capital. Other movies lined up for this horror/sf season include *Forbidden Planet*, *The Invisible Boy*, *The Howling*, *Down of the Dead*, *Shivers*, *Night of the Living Dead*, *Raid*, *and The Brood* (Feb 20th); *The Thing* and *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (Feb 22nd); *Alien* and *Day The Earth Stood Still* (Feb 23rd); *Women from the Prehistoric Planet* and *Devil Girl from Mars* (Feb 25th).

And from what we can make out, even those far from London will be to see *Patrick* eventually, as the Beab have bought the television rights and are planning to screen the film in the next few months.



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Now On Sale

The end of Blake?

As we put this issue of Starburst together, our office has become literally swamped with mail. The avalanche of letters following the final episode of Blake's 7 was so huge that just reading your comments became almost a full-time job. We've taken the liberty of reprinting just a few of those letters here.

I am shocked, depressed and feel betrayed. As a fan of Blake's 7 since its beginnings and having seen the final episode screened by the BBC on 21.12.81 at 19.20 hrs, I feel that Britain's equivalent of Star Trek, admired throughout the world and brought to such a violent end abrupt end in the Blake episode, represents a betrayal of all the faithful fans and followers of this innovative and spell binding escapism.

The gambles taken in excluding Blake from the last two series and destroying the "Liberator", the very symbol of freedom in the beginnings have been wiped out in the final minutes, successful though they were, along with the cynical and bickering heroes, all too human and all the more easily identifiable with for it.

Why, oh why, at this time of the Polish crisis should such a blatantly political statement be made, shockingly potent, that revolution against oppression and violence is doomed to failure and extinction.

I could weep for the futility of it all.

Gramham J. Darlington SRN,
Liverpool.

I have just watched the final episode (?) of Blake's 7 and I just could not believe my eyes. Get hold of the producer, Vere Lomimer, threaten him, apply the thumb screws, throw him at the mercy of Sarvalen, anything, but get an answer out of him, will Blake's 7 continue? My blood pressure has already gone up, my heart is palpating, I'm hitting the bottle, if this is the end of Blake's 7, fancy being disillusioned with life at 21.

Mr T. Kovacs,
Wakefield,
W. Yorks.

I am writing about the untimely demise of Blake's 7. It hurt. This may seem overly melodramatic, but I feel that it describes my feelings over the way that the BBC clumsily killed off the characters. Their deaths, after we had seen them escape far more deadly situations, was a mistake of the first degree. I was not an ardent fan of the previous series, but I had seen all the episodes of the latest series, and the way in which the stormtroopers caught unprepared (after they had already been warned) and were able to pick them off in order was totally out of context.

I do accept major characters being killed if it will improve the story, but in this instance the BBC are using it as an excuse to end the series and so not make any more episodes. If the BBC had allowed the characters to survive, it would have been able to resurrect the series if the demand was great enough (it has been for the last two series). As it is now, to continue



would either mean Avon carrying on alone, or all the characters merely being stunned which would be cheap.

Deaths have never been properly handled on Blake's 7 though, both Blake and Sarvalen return from the dead (the former to meet his demise at Avon's hands due to his incredible inability to explain himself), while Jenna and Cally both died off-screen, their deaths to be met with amazingly little remorse in the surviving characters. Only Gan got a comparatively fair deal.

The really offensive part was the stupidity of the killings, and the manner in which all the killings were crammed on top of another into the last 3 minutes. If the BBC had used some sense, Blake's 7 could have ended properly. As it was it ended with a belly-flop.

Keith Morris,
Hornchurch,
Essex.

I'm sorry to say it, but the final episode of Blake's 7 seems to have consisted of an attempt to shock the viewer as much as could be possible. And it worked. I've no doubt that there will be an unprecedented reaction against it, in terms of letters, most of them full of anger. And why not? After four years of living with the characters, and sharing "the adventures", the producers decide to forget the people who helped the series last 4 years for the sake of a cheap shock — to go out with a bang, and all that. They had obviously got word from the BBC that this was absolutely the final series, and thought "why not?"

I'll tell you why not! Apart from the fact that it was out of character for Avon to make two serious (and fatal) mistakes — a) not finding out from Orac that extra forces were around, b) killing Blake without hearing his explanation — the producers have totally invalidated the whole of the last four series. We see them as a pointless, ultimately futile, series of actions made by doomed people for the sake of a lost cause. Evil — the Federation —

triumphs over Good, a message we don't need forced down our throats to know what happens in life. Do we really want to encourage an attitude of "what's the use in doing anything since you can't beat the system"? Being unemployed I especially resent that sort of attitude, which comes as a result of it, anyway. I need hope, not more depression. Most of all, I resent being taken for a ride. The fans have been well and truly kicked in the teeth!

Thank you very much Blake's 7, for some of the old episodes. I think I'll rewrite the final episode as it should have been, for myself, and forget this one.

John Swindell,
Mansfield,
Notts.

I cried buckets. Over what may you ask? Well, to some people it may be blatantly obvious. What else but the last episode of Blake's 7. Blake's death, by our hero, Avon's hand. Vile, Soolin and Uncle Tom Cobby and all Well, what choice did he have. He killed his best friend. So the federation finally won, and got Orac into the bargain I'm sure all readers will greatly miss them all. I will, I hope the Beeb will decide to repeat the original series, (heavy hint) even if it is on Beeb 2. I missed the first series.

Please could you print a photo of Paul Darrow's last smile as the illustrious Avon? I would be eternally grateful!

Andrea Curtis,
Barry,
S. Wales.

Obviously, the decision by the BBC to end the life of one of their most popular series in years has not been received well by the fans. But what can we mere mortals do? Plenty! We all pay our licence fee every year. And we are the consumers of the BBC's output. They will take notice of our views — if we make them known. On behalf of Blake's 7 fans everywhere, Starburst urges you to take up a pen and write to the BBC protesting against the decision to take Blake's 7 off the air. But, if such letters are to be taken seriously and not as the ramblings of a few fanatical followers please observe these guidelines when writing your letter.

DO be polite!

DO keep your letter brief.

DO NOT send one letter with several signatures. Separate letters will be more effective.

DO address your letter to the correct person. Bill Cotton, The Programme Controller, BBC Television Centre, Wood Lane, London W12.

And if you've already written to anyone other than Mr Cotton, please write again. Chances are, it didn't get to him.

There is no doubt that if the BBC receives enough intelligent, constructive pleas from the fans of Blake's 7, they will give very serious consideration to reinstating the show. But it can only work if the fans of the series are not to be savages!

The *Bogey Man* is more in the same vein as *Halloween* but at least this time with the saving grace of being in a supernatural context. Approaching this sort of film with the trepidation we all do these days, we can make the mistake in pinpointing its only merit in an effort of justification, and if that seems like damning *The Bogey Man* with faint praise, let me also say that it is a story well told, unpretentious in treatment and its director, Ulli Lommel, welds the basic themes we have all seen too much of recently very well and fashions a cohesive and satisfying whole.

Not only does the script plunder *Halloween* but also *The Exorcist*, *Carrie* and *The Amityville Horror* to name but a few more. However, for once, I can forgive what is usually a blatant lack of inspiration and praise the very quirky and perverse story that has been conjured out of the ready-made melting pot of ideas by Lommel, star Suzanna Love and David Herschel.

The story opens in the past. After being tied to the bed by his mother's lover for spying on them, Willy takes a knife and stabs him to death. Twenty years later his sister Lacey (Suzanna Love) has never been able to forget the part she played in this tableau and is plagued by nightmares that have so alarmed her husband Jake (Ron James) that he suggests they visit the house where it all happened in an effort to exorcise her guilt once and for all. But there, her fears prove to be well founded. Standing alone in her mother's old bedroom, Lacey is horrified to see the murdered man advancing towards her in the mirror. She becomes so hysterical that Jake smashes the mirror to pieces unknown to them all that the malevolent force telekinetically unleashed will haunt whoever should come into contact with every broken fragment.

The Bogey Man is full of striking images that bring a whole new perspective to the *Halloween*-clone formula. One occurs when, after several deaths, a priest is called in to exorcise the remainder of the looking-glass. As he touches it, it glows with a red hot intensity that sends a broken shard into Lacey's eye turning her into the mirror's accomplice. As you can tell, it's all very bizarre on a thematic level. One of the more interesting ideas to occur to the scriptwriters is where Lacey's son steps on a piece of the glass and goes off fishing where it reflects the sun—and the evil—across the lake to a group of teenagers with suitably eerie and grotesque results. I don't want to ruin this, the most jolting of shocks... suffice it to say that it brings a whole new meaning to making out with your girlfriend in the car. A word here too about the music by Synthe-Sound-Trax that heightens the suspense extremely well.

It shouldn't be forgotten that the film is very evidently a low budget quickie but Lommel's direction raises it above the general appalling level of recent offerings with confidence in his material and noteworthy imagination. Thankfully missing here is the deadly pace and non-existent action he brought to his Rainer Werner Fassbinder factory film, *Tenderness of the Wolves*.

John Carradine is on hand once again in an extended cameo as Lacey's psychiatrist, but as usual he is completely superfluous apart from misguided marquee value. Incidentally the film title has an 'o' missing from its original American title of *The Bogey Man*. This was just in case you thought it would be a disco musical! All told, in more ways than one, you should "Watch out for *The Bogey Man*!" ●

the bogey man



The Bogey Man (1981)

Suzanna Love (Lacey), Ron James (Jake), John Carradine (Dr Warren), Nicholas Love (Willy), Raymond Boyden (Kevin), Felicity Morgan (Helen), Bill Rayburn (Ernest), Llewelyn Thomas (Father Reilly), Jay Wright (Young Willy), Natasha Schiano (Young Lacey), Gillian Gordon (Mother), Howard Grant (Lover), Jane Pratt (Jane), Lucinda Ziesing (Susan), David Swim (Timmy), Katie Casey, Ernest Meier, Stony Richards and Claudia Porcelli (Teenagers), Cathrine Tambini (Katy).

Produced and directed by Ulli Lommel, screenplay by Ulli Lommel and Suzanna Love, photographed by David Perling and Jochen Breitenstein, edited by Terrell Tannan, special effects by Craig Harris, executive producer Wolf Schmidt. Time 83 mins

Cert X

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HELL NIGHT



Above left: Marti (Linda Blair) watches horrified as Jeff (Peter Barton) falls to his death. Above: Marti and Jeff come under a savage attack in the Garth mansion.

Review by Alan Jones

In another attempt to mine the ever profitable youth market as successfully as he did with *Halloween*, producer Irwin Yablans has concocted a poor imitation indeed with *Hell Night*. Director Tom De Simone is unfortunately no match for John Carpenter who elevated the fright film genre to a height that still has no precedent apart from Tobe Hooper's underrated *Funhouse*. What Carpenter did with *Halloween*, De Simone tries to do for the haunted house genre and the result is barely adequate.

Here, to be a successful pledge to the Alpha Sigma Rho fraternity, a group of two girls and two boys have to spend the night at the supposedly haunted old dark house, Garth Mansion, where twelve years previously Virgil Garth took an axe to each member of his deformed family and then committed suicide. The twist is, of course, that two members of the family are still alive, so the four youngsters don't know if the bizarre

happenings are practical jokes played on them by hidden members of the fraternity or the real thing. That's the premise and as you can see hardly original at all. As each one dies a gruesome death (although actually not that gruesome considering what we have seen recently) it's up to Seth (Vincent Van Patten), to go and try to get help, but as this is *Hell Night*, the police don't believe a word he says. Meanwhile, back at the mansion of madness it is giving nothing away to say that the film's star, Linda Blair as Marti, is the only one to escape unscathed. But not from my criticism, she doesn't. Blair acts like she's in a different film from the rest of the cast.

De Simone betrays his background in softcore sex films like *Chatterbox* and *Prison Girls* and hardcore gay pornography, directing those sort of scenes here with a really unpleasant edge although partly to blame are the inanities uttered by the cast courtesy of screenwriter Randolph Feldman. In terms of horror, the film has only one good shock and that's stolen from *Halloween*

anyway. It comes at the end of the film where Garth, or whoever (I lost interest), is on top of Marti's getaway car. Still, he is dispatched in a novel way which is about the only original idea in the entire film.

It looks like Irwin Yablans luck has finally run out—*Hell Night* is sheer hell to sit through as far as I'm concerned ●

Hell Night (1981)

Linda Blair (as Marti), Vincent Van Patten (Seth), Peter Barton (Jeff), Kevin Brophy (Peter), Jenny Neumann (May), Suki Goodwin (Denise), Jimmy Sturtevant (Scott), Hal Ralston (older cop), Cary Fox (younger cop), Ronald Gans (driver), Gloria Hellman (party girl).

Directed by Tom De Simone. Written by Randolph Feldman. Music by Dan Wyman. Music editor Ken Harman. Edited by Tony Di Marco. Director of photography Mac Ahlberg. Art director Steven G. Legler. Executive producers Joseph Wolf and Chuck Russell. Produced by Irwin Yablans and Bruce Cohn Curtis.

Time: 102 mins

Cert X

THE UNSEEN

Review by
Bobby Dupea



Film-makers, the little ones, never learn. They almost go out of their way to ask for trouble with their titles. I mean...! What else can one truthfully say about Mrs. Ringo Starr's new horror trip, *The Unseen*, except... and so it should be!

Of course, one could say that anyway. To be quick, flip and cynical about it. But we're not in the habit of being quick, flip or cynical at *Starburst*, are we? We say what we feel. And if we happen to be unlucky enough to spend yet another 89 minutes in the dark with a film that makes us hit the typewriter in a quick, flip and cynical mood, then so be it. That's what what the film did to us, not vice-versa.

In this instance, the stupid title—because it's obvious to a four-year-old how bad a movie this is—has been retained by a whole new team of film-makers. I haven't got all (or any) grief about the reasons for his last minute succession of ownership, and indeed, creation, but when I first learned about *The Unseen*, shooting had finished and the film was produced by Anthony B. Unger, written and directed by Danny Steinmann, and presented, whatever that means, by Herbert R. Steinmann and Billy Baxter.

The names, admittedly, are nothing to have you running across town and country to the nearest cinema playing *The Unseen* with a high expectation quotient. Mr Unger's monicker seems to ring a bell from the old, the very old Commonwealth United combine, which spawns such high-priced forgettables as Peter Sellers and Ringo Starr's *The Magic Christian* and Peter Ustinov's *Viva Max*. However, I could be muddling him with his presumed kin, Oliver A. Unger, who more recently used Barbra Bach (among others) in *Force Ten* from Naverone. And all I know about Billy Baxter is that he produced a tv special about the Cannes festival the other year.

But as Sam Goldwyn is said to have said, we have all passed a lot of water since then...

When the film opened recently in America (to poor business; it's not bloody enough for our Transatlantic cousins), the credits read: "produced by Mr Unger" still, but with an executive and a co-producer, written by Michael L. Grace, directed by Peter Fogel and presented (still) by Herbert R. Steinmann, but now in association, as they term it, with Jeffrey Ingber.

Who actually did what with what and to whom, I honestly don't know anymore. (Perhaps Ms Bach can tell us sometime—she's currently near the top of all our interview lists).

But that's *American* credits for you. Political and... buyable. I really don't see how we can set much store by them since the news that a Houston store was selling a screen credit as the ultimate in Christmas gifts. Just 1,250,000 dollars for the privilege of working on Bob Evan's next project, *The Cotton Club*, and winding up with a 'production associate' credit on screen. Hahl (Texas millionaires out to get Junior something really cute for Xmas were, no doubt, further delighted to note that the price of this gift was... tax-deductible!)

All of which has nothing to do with *The Unseen*, beyond assisting in putting off the moment of truth a little longer.

Barbara Bach looks good. That's the good news. And from the outset, this looks as if it could be a film John Brosnan, sundry readers and myself could go for. BB is a woman in jeopardy. Again... Or, tragically, as the film soon proves, it's her career which is in the worst jeopardy.

The bad news is that she's far from her usual vibrant self. Well, she is pregnant in the story. Furthermore, she is arguing with her



This spread: A selection of scenes from the forthcoming horror, *The Unseen*. No prizes for guessing which is Barbara Bach. Karen Lamb is on the left of the above picture and the retarded monster is played by Stephen Furst. Not a lot more to say is there?



ex-footballer lover about an abortion. She's for. He's against. By the end of the film, such a move should be superfluous.

BB plays Jane Fonda. Yes, *another* tv newswoman. Sorry, tv newswoman. She's covering a Danish Day festival in a California town, Solvang, with her two women (er, person) crew. They are the tops at their trade, very together persons. And yet, they'd never thought of booking hotel rooms for the trip. So what do they do, these telly professionals, but take rooms in the kind of out of town mansion that is so instantly suspicious that nbt even Norman Bates would be seen dead in it.

The joint is run by the similarly suspicious and remote Sydney Lassick. You'll remember Syd from *Cuckoo's Nest*. He's still somewhat cuckoo. Shifty. And apparently out to win Solvang's Ernie Borgnine Clone contest. He lives with his sister, Leila Goldoni. Live with, is right... The result of their incestuous affair is the inevitable monster killer locked in the basement.

"It's not right," say Leila as the new guests check in. "They could find out."

Could, has nothing to do with it. Of course they will!

Lois Young's sound-recorderist is first to go... which doesn't help Barbara's tele-film in town, nor the one on screen. Lois is attacked, as the script has it, by an unknown force... She's stuffed into a furnace vent, her head twisted and broken, sticking out of the opening. Blood is everywhere and in true Norman Bates manner, Leila Goldoni, cleans up the mess... just in time for Karen Lamb's blonde cinematographer (Barbara's sister but don't let that plot-line worry you) to be spilled all over the place again.

Poor Leila. A woman's work is just never done!

Stephen Furst, from *Animal House*, is the huge and retarded offspring to whom killing is a game. He's sort something of a man-child and looks as if he's strayed in this film from a Fellini set. Rather in keeping with John Landis' *American Werewolf*, here's another case of after *Animal House*, a different kind of animal...

The rest of the script—whoever wrote it—is written by numbers. Not a single shock or surprise in what goes on, except in how badly it is constructed, shot and acted.

Make-up effects by Craig Reardon and Harry Woolman show some thought, design and even feeling for the genre. Nothing else does. Fogel allows Lassick and Goldoni to go way, but way over the top. They chew more scenery than when Faye Dunaway played Joan Crawford and Crawford lost. Whether this limp rag of a film is imported to Europe in any fashion other than a fast buck video cassette, remains to be unseen ●

The Unseen (1981)

Barbara Bach (as Jennifer Fast), Sydney Lassick (Ernest Keller), Stephen Furst (Junior), Leila Goldoni (Virginia Keller), Karen Lamm (Karen Fast), Doug Barr (Tony Ross), Lois Young (Nick Thompson).

Directed by Peter Fogel, Script by Michael L. Grace, Photography by Roberto Guezada, Additional photography by Irv Goodnott, James Carter, Edited by Jonathan Braun, Music by Michael J. Lewis, Make-up design by Craig Reardon, Special effects by Harry Woolman, Stunt co-ordination by Sonny Shields, Produced by Anthony B. Unger, Co-producer, Don P. Behrus, Executive producer, Howard Goldfarb.

A Triune Films production for US release by World Northall Films.
Time: 89 mins

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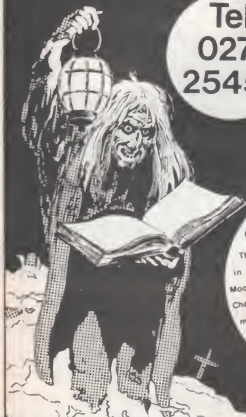
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LITAN

Feature by Phil Edwards

While John Brosnan has been drowning his sorrows over the failure to turn *Jawman* from an idea into a concept, French film critic and journalist Jean-Claude Romer has sold his first screenplay, *Litan*, and the feature was shot in mid-1981.

Jean-Claude Romer is well-known in France for his television programme *Monsieur Cinema*, a weekly programme of clips and comments from the latest releases. He is probably best-known to fantasy film fans for his pioneering fantasy film magazine *Midi-Minuit Fantastique*, still regarded by many as the most important journal of its type and the fore-runner of the likes of *Famous Monsters of Filmland* and all the rest which followed in its wake.

Jean-Claude told me of his latest venture at the recent Paris Fantasy Film Festival. *Litan* is a mysterious mountain city which hides many secrets and treasure, and is peopled by a bizarre race.

The film is directed by Jean-Pierre Mocky who despite the twenty features to his credit finds *Litan* the first fantasy film he has directed.

The film is to be premiered at the Avoriez Fantasy Film Festival and opens in Paris in early 1982. ●



DRAGONSLAYER

Review by Alan Jones

Brilliant" and "Stunning" are such overused words of hyperbole these days that when a film comes along that truly merits them I fear their effect is often dulled. I tend not to use these words too often myself but I just have to apply them to *Dragonslayer*. It is stunning. Why? Because unlike most special effect forays of recent times, *Dragonslayer*, with the aid of superior stop-motion animation, hand puppets and hydraulic body mechanisms superbly puts on celluloid one of the most spectacular creatures of myth which in turn totally immerses you in a world of fantasy. You believe what you see. Few films have the ability to do that successfully. In recent times *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and *Time Bandits* have put across this element superbly — *Dragonslayer* does it equally magnificently as it offers some of the most indelible images ever to be seen in

the cinema of the fantastic. The film has a fairly thin storyline — it is a fairytale after all — and the direction by Matthew Robbins can only be described as adequate but it is for the technological wizardry alone that I urge you to see *Dragonslayer*.

The film opens as a group of despondent villagers, headed by Valerian (Caitlin Clarke), make their way to Cragganmore, the home of an elderly master sorcerer, Ulrich (Ralph Richardson), and his apprentice, Galen (Peter MacNicol). They want the wizard to help them vanquish the dragon, Vermithrax Pejorative, who has been plaguing their land for decades. At the moment the dragon is appeased by twice yearly sacrifices of beautiful young virgins but the villagers want it killed once and for all to put an end to the misery. On the first few steps of the

journey, Ulrich is killed, but Galen with the wizard's amulet clutched in his hand, decides to carry out the deed himself and upon arrival at the dragon's lair causes a landslide that blocks the entrance of the carnivorous fire-breather. The subsequent rejoicing in the land is completely shattered when the dragon escapes and wreaks havoc on selected homesteads. Galen will have to try again, only this time he arms himself with a suitable weapon for the purpose — a special spear tempered and honed by Valerian's father. Armed with his dragonslayer, a shield made up of dragon scales and his love of Valerian, Galen enters the creature's abode. Is this all he'll need to vanquish the dragon? Have no fear, Ralph Richardson literally rises from the grave to help his misguided aide and the epic battles that ensue take place in the air and on the ground, and reusing



technical fireworks and the flawless melding of stop-motion puppetry and modelwork I mentioned earlier.

I almost feel like aping those cinema advertisements that at one time were used for myriad Italian spectacles — See the dragon rise from the Lake of Fire. See the helpless princess eaten alive by baby dragons. See Galen riding on the dragon's neck. See ... this all for yourself!

There are so many nice touches in *Dragonslayer*. For example, bright colours are only used for the sequences involving magic. This elicits a subliminal surprise in itself that makes them all the more rewarding. One of the more notable technological advances in the film is the Halo Crane used extensively to present the dragon's point of view.

This device is quite startling in one shot where the camera pulls away from the dragon's first victim and then suddenly, and shockingly, belches a flame towards her. It is worth nothing here that although this is a Disney release, it is so successful in creating an eerie atmosphere for the darker side of the fable, that it does have a fair quota of frightening moments. One of the best elements of the





script, written by Robbins and Hal Barwood, is the way the last dragon is tied to the inevitable death of magic and the occasional snatches of emergent Christianity go a long way towards creating this feeling of loss. In that respect, the film is similar to the character of Merlin in John Boorman's *Excalibur* signifying a dying breed. Also in common with *Excalibur* is the production design, here courtesy of Elliot Scott, which is top notch. The film is given a classy medieval look by Derek Vanlint's photography too.

When he was shooting the film, Peter MacNicol told me that his one fear about

Dragonslayer was that he would see himself appearing on lots of cereal packets. In retrospect he needn't have been so concerned. Inexplicably, the film has not been a success in America apparently due to Paramount, who released the film in the US, having to choose between it and *Raiders of the Lost Ark* as to which they should promote the hardest. My own view is that their publicity campaign was so off-putting, saying as it did, "*Dragonslayer* is *not* a fantasy". How ludicrous can you get? When you consider it was up against the disappointing *Clash of the Titans*, and failed, even though every

effect is superior — it is incredible! Ray Harryhausen, who has been using the same animation techniques for the last 25 years, apparently said when he saw *Dragonslayer* that the film was OK but not really the direction he thought he should be moving in. In actual fact he should be thanking Industrial Light and Magic for showing how successfully integrated stop-motion animation can be in a fully-fledged fantasy film.

My one hope with *Dragonslayer* is that its European release will redress the balance of its failure to compete successfully in the US market. It really does deserve to.

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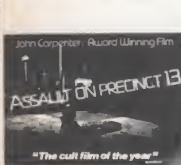


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HARRISON FORD

The world's No. 1 movie star—and Starbustar, come to that—scratched his new beard. And yawned. Yeah, said Harrison Ford, he'd found time to enjoy books again. He's lately been reading *Gorki Park*. But no, he wasn't going to be in the movie. No way! He was taking a rest. A loooooong rest. Six months of it. More time off from films than he could remember having since he first quit movies to be a carpenter. "It would," he underlined, "take an Act of Congress to get me to work before *Jedi*!"

He deserves the break, we would all agree. Just check through the list of the Top Four Movies in screen history for proof. Harrison Ford is the star of three of them. (We think you know the titles without any prompting.) Within the next couple of years, he could be the star of five in the Top Ten... or indeed the Top Five.

Not even the people he's continually being likened to of late—Gable, Bogart, Wayne, etc.—ever had it that good. And he's enjoying what he terms his luck. We're in France at that moment, where he's being hailed as a "turbo-seDUCTor" with the shoulders of John Wayne, the smile of Alain Delon, the vulnerability of Woody Allen and the intelligence of Paul Newman.

He smiles as the review is read out to him. "And there I was thinking I was just Harrison Ford."

His next two big movies contain both good news and bad...

The bad news is that, according to Ford, *The Revenge of the Jedi* marks the exit of Han Solo from the *Star Wars* saga...

The good news is that Steven Spielberg has agreed to direct the *Raiders of the Lost Ark* sequel in 1983. In fact he's adamant that no one else will do it. "I'd hate to let it slip through my fingers into somebody else's hands," Spielberg has stated. "I'll certainly not be involved in the third or fourth one, but I really want to do the follow-up, because the new story is even more spectacular than *Raiders*."

When I try to clarify the shock Solo news—"you mean it's the last *Star Wars* tale for you or for Solo?"—Ford looks and sounds stunned. "For Solo," he says quickly. Then, as if it's the first time such a thought has crossed his mind, he adds, "I assume they will not replace me with another person to play Solo."

He shakes his head. No, of course not they wouldn't, he appears to be telling himself. Then, he explains the reasons for Solo's departure. Sparsely. "After *Jedi*, the next sequence of three *Star Wars* stories goes back in time. So, Solo's not in them.

Ah! And, or so it would appear, he's not due to come back in the final set of three, the films that will take over where *Jedi* leaves off?

"You've got it," he yells. "You've got it exactly right!"

Another journalist sharing this very early morning conclave is the surprised one now. You mean, he says, they're going to make *nine* of these films. Ford simply nods... and looks over to me quizzically, like what-planet-is-this-other-guy-coming-from...?

"Well, a year or so back," he says, "everyone would have said, are they really gonna do three?"

The other guy is still worried by what he somehow sees as Ford's defection from the films. Surely, he asks, he's committed to the series in a way? "I was committed only to the first *Star Wars*," responds Ford somewhat tersely.

"It means a moral commitment," insists the other chap.

"Oh yeah," mutters Ford. "But there are moral commitments and moral commitments. I have a greater moral commitment to myself... and to my career. But I am very loyal to those people, sure. I have a long relationship with George."

That seems to satisfy the gent from Denmark and



THE DEAVILLE TAPES PART I BY TONY CRAWLEY

in his pause that follows, I'm able, in the time-honoured tradition of shared confabs, to get a few of my own licks in... A lot.

Like, how much persuasion did he require to play Indiana Jones and thereby headline two film series at once?

"Well, I'm not headlining the *Star Wars* films," he says.

Starburst: You are for some, for lots of the fans.

Harrison Ford: No, no, this is an ensemble group. I'm part of it. That's all.

Even so, hadn't there been some friction about playing Solo the second time in *Empire*...?

Not a bit of friction. What you heard was the basis of

one 15-minute conversation during shooting...

George first approached me with the *Raiders* idea without a script. He very simply called up and said, "We've been kicking this idea around that you should play the part in Steven's movie." I said, "George, that's very nice—what's it about?" He sent me the script and I thought it wonderful... I should add I wasn't even their first choice. They'd wanted Tom Selleck but he couldn't get out of his tv commitments for *Magnus P.I.* So I got the part by default.

After reading the script, I had a meeting with Steven. My youngest son, Willard, and my girlfriend, Melissa, went over to Steven's house. And the only question I had in my mind about it was, because both



Above: Harrison Ford as the detective Deckard in the forthcoming Ridley Scott film *Blade Runner* which is not due to open in this country till late in 1982. Opposite top: Ford as the smuggler Han Solo, in the George Lucas fantasy *Star Wars*. Opposite below: Ford as Solo with C-3PO in the *Star Wars* sequel *The Empire Strikes Back*.



Empire and *Raiders* were written by Larry Kasden, there was some little similarity in the characters. Or in the dialogue, not the characters. Steven agreed we should make a definition between the two... and not give Indiana Jones the kind snappy dialogue which, in cases was a little Han Solo.

Who decided on the look, the overall Indy image? George...

Silly question!

It's a strange thing. George had some concept drawings made maybe two years before there was any thought of me doing the part. They were by an artist named Steranko. If you look at those alongside stills of the film, it's very striking, the similarity between the two. George insisted on the leather jacket. George insisted on the wide brimmed felt hat—even though we were in Tunisia in a 120 degrees. I kept saying: Jesus, is there any reason for this... suffering!

So the hat was one of the things you hated about Tunisia. There were others, I gather.

Well, the main one was dysentery. That'll do it every time! That does spoil a nation for you. To see it from a toilet seat. It was just a very tough location, with all that physical stuff.

And you're no keep-fit expert, more of an anti-jogger, right?

I'm not militant about it! But every time the question comes up, I can manage to sneer. It's a common enough question about exercise, considering *Raiders* and things. People always ask me how I keep in shape. And I say, being in movies is enough exercise for me. I mean, hell, if I hadn't done some of the stunts in *Raiders*, I wouldn't be seen in the film at all!

What happens next to Indy. I take it you are going to make the next one?

Oh sure. With great pleasure! Oh yeah! I think we begin in '83 and for the first time, I think, in the history of sequels and good directors. Steven is going to direct it. (Well, he did say he knew nothing about old movies. Not even, it appears, such recent old movies as *The Godfather* couple, both, directed, of course, by another of his movie-brat pals, Francis Coppola.) So this is very exciting for me. It was one of the best working experiences in my life, working with Steven. Any marked difference in the directing styles of Steven and George.

The difference is the difference between people. I don't know how to relate those differences to you... Let's hear more about the best experience with Spielberg then!

It was... excellent! Steven allowed a kind of collaboration that was really a lotta fun for me. I like to become really involved as much and as long as possible. Steven was always willing to let to do another take if I insisted I could do it better. With some people you have an extraordinary kind of exchange of ideas, where one idea seems to lead to another to another to another... Steven and I work that way.

A lotta people, if you have a point, a different point of view, you have to sort of win the whole argument, you know. You have to make your case so strong that the other person has to give up completely. That's not so with Steven. I mean, if I had a little bit of an idea, he adds to it, and then I can add to it and he adds to it and it builds into something we both think is better than what we had before... or so stupid we end up rolling about on the floor with laughter! You've been very laudatory about Irving Kershner on the *Empire* film, too.

He was... wonderful! He's a different kind of director. But we also had a very close relationship on the level of freedom to contribute. A lot of directors make one film a year and don't wanna know. "Just say the words, mah friend, and let's get out of here." That relationship provided the most illuminating chapter in Alan Arnold's book about the making of *Empire*... your discussions with Kersh about the scene in the freezer.

I didn't read the book!

What? That surprises me. I thought you'd have to sign a release, sanctioning it for publication.

I gave general permission for anything to be used... Anything that George would permit! Because I don't care. I don't really care. But, yes, it was an extraordinary situation that day. That was the day that

Kershner was wearing a radio-mike, so they had all his conversations verbatim.

*How did you get on with Ridley Scott on **Blade Runner**?*

(He yawns again.) I did that in London.

WHAT?! Los Angeles, surely?

Wait a minute, wait a minute... You know what it is, I was just talking to Ridley on the phone, and he is in London... This is a very good example of what happens to you when you're in Venice one day, Paris the next and now it's... where... Deauville?

And it is kinda early in the morning!

No, no, there's no excuse for this at all *(He positively bristles at himself)*. When they first asked me about doing **Blade Runner**, I was in London on... **Empire**, I guess. And they said they were going to do it in London. And I said, "Well, thank you very much, gentlemen, but I don't want to work in London anymore. I wanna go home..." I'd had long enough in London from **Star Wars**, on through **Force 10 From Navarone** and **The Empire Strikes Back**... and I wanted to be back home with my kids.

When they came back to me, it turned out they couldn't put it together in London for some reason and had to do it in Hollywood. They asked me again and that's when I said, Yes.

There have been stories of more friction about this film, between you and Scott. For instance, Scott likes to run his own camera during shooting and you, well, preferred that he didn't. So for that matter, I guess, did the Hollywood film unions. What happened?

It was no great bone of contention or anything between us... I don't think he ever got around that problem. He just learned to accommodate the

reality—actually, Ridley was able to shoot a few things when he really wanted to. And he's very good. Especially with a hand-held camera. I think there'll be quite a few shots in the film with Ridley operating his hand-held camera.

What's your beef about that, anyway?

He likes to watch the performance through the lens. As an actor, I'm glad he wasn't able to do that... all the time. I think it's better to have his attention on all the other things. He knows that's the way I feel.

I think that when a director is looking through the camera, he's watching the edges to be sure where everything is. I want a director to be helping me with the whole scene, the performance. It's not that this isn't possible, or that Ridley hasn't done it before... and very well.

You play Deckard, very much a Philip Marlowe type, an urban city detective... but in the year 2020. Urban lows!

Even lower than that. Like lower depths...

He's retired and lured back in the game to track down six killers—"replicants." A kind of android, almost indistinguishable from real humans... it says here.

You look too young to have retired.

In this case, the retirement is something to be earned by good service. There are retirements and retirements... for mental strain, for example, like the air traffic controllers. Not many of them reach the end of the line.

I've heard that Deckard is a replicant... android... robot... him, or itself. Is that correct?

NO!

I gather that Ridley Scott wants him to be a replicant. And I've seen the adjective "android" entering into





descriptions of Deckard in certain American magazines.

Did you...? Well, it will be a surprise to me. But then I haven't seen the final cut of the film yet.

How ambitious are you? Ever want to play Hamlet, I mean.

No. (He laughs). No, I really don't have any focused ambition at all. My mission, when I started in the business, was simply not to have to do anything else for a living! And now, my only ambition is to good word. For me, that depends on the idea, the script... I can't foresee what comes up in the future. So I can't have a focussed ambition for me.

Apart from avoiding being typecast as a space buccaneer, which you still certainly managed in a hurry.

Listen, from the beginning, when *Star Wars* came out, and I saw what was happening... well, even before that. When I was first starting as an actor and under contract at Columbia Pictures for a little while, then at Universal, they kept putting me in the same kinda roles. If there were two bad brothers, I was the sensitive one! So, I actually stopped being an actor and became a carpenter as I've told you before (see *Starburst 3*). I did that so that I didn't have to do the same thing over and over again.

It was my idea, at the time, if I didn't get a better part than usual, more money, better billing, I wouldn't do the part. So, for the next five, six years (he laughs) I only worked twice. People only met this condition twice. *American Graffiti* came along... and after that for the next two years I was offered nothing but the same kinda part. So I never worked. I never worked!



went back to doing carpentry.

Then *Star Wars* came out. When I saw it before it came out, I thought this is gonna be a big, commercial success, a lotta people are gonna see this. The first and most important thing I can do right now is get something on film that is a total contrast. This is why I did *Heres*. Well, it wasn't as successful. Not a lot of people saw it. But the people in the business saw it and that was very important to me.

So even though I've done three (sic) of the *Star Wars*, it's not as if I've done the same character in the other films. Only in the *Star Wars* films. And inbetween—because of the success, of course, of the *Star Wars* films I've done quite a few other kinds of film and I've never done the same part twice in any of them. Some of them weren't so good, but I think it was critical for me to do those films. Not only that, but I enjoyed doing... most... of them.

Even so, you're still typecast in a way. You've become the No 1 fantasy hero. How do you feel about that? I don't... wanna argue with the terms... but I think the word "hero" has no particular meaning. I don't act heroic in the films. It's not based on the character being totally heroic. He does extraordinary things, but it seems to more impulsive than circumstantial. But isn't that what true heroes are, is impulsive?

I don't understand this word "hero", actually. I thought you were going to query the other word—fantasy!

I would... I was going to get to that. Because I don't really know what that means either! They use it, magazines like yours, in the context of *Star Wars* and now they use it in the context of *Raiders*. Heil, all films are fantasies, aren't they?

STAR WARS™



This month's *Starburst SF Classic* turns the clock back just four years to 1977, the year that George Lucas unveiled his science fantasy masterpiece on an unsuspecting public and changed the face of sf in the movies for good. In the intervening years, the movie has shot up the charts to become the largest grossing movie of all time. Returns of over 200 million dollars worldwide have made George Lucas one of the most powerful filmmakers in the industry. Phil Edwards looks back at the making of the movie.



Above: Gary Kurtz and George Lucas pictured during filming of *Star Wars*. Below: The shooting of the triumphant victory celebration in the closing scene of the movie. Bottom: On location with the crew in the deserts of Tunisia.



After only four years it seems odd to me to be setting pen to paper to write a *Starburst SF Classic* feature on *Star Wars*. The film is still so much in the public consciousness that to treat the film in a retrospective manner seems almost redundant. But is it? I think not. *Star Wars* is still probably the most important film ever made, not so much for its dramatic content which is actually extremely unimportant, but its effect on so many areas of the entertainment industry.

Before *Star Wars*, science fiction cinema wallowed in a cultism which somehow prevented wide audience acceptance. Certainly in the 50s, sf cinema had attracted big audiences, though generally these audiences were composed of young teenagers and for the most the films concerned were low budget efforts which owed more to the horror genre than the field of space fantasy—outstanding exceptions being *Forbidden Planet* and *This Island, Earth*.

The 60s were pretty much a wasteland apart from the landmark film 2001: *A Space Odyssey* which, despite its success, didn't usher in a new boom in the field the way *Day the Earth Stood Still* had done in the 50s. The reason for this was more for economic reasons than anything else. 2001 had cost a lot of money and had taken several years to make, thanks to Stanley Kubrick's meticulous attention to detail. Although 2001 ultimately made a lot of money for MGM, it had also nearly bankrupted the studio, a fact that Hollywood met with a great deal of wariness. It was also slow to break even, gradually building its audience through word of mouth rather than reviews, which at the time were mixed.

It looked like a new sf boom may have been underway in the mid 70s when MGM announced that *Logan's Run* was to be finally produced after several years of abortive attempts to turn that most filmable of sf novels into celluloid reality. But *Logan's Run* proved a disaster from almost every point of view, and once more the Hollywood moguls were wary of the sf genre.

George Lucas's first brush with the sf genre came while still a student at UCLA Film School when he made the short *THX 1138 4EB*, an Orwellian fable of uncompromising bleakness. In 1971 Lucas expanded the short film into a feature called simply *THX 1138* which starred Robert Duvall. Though the film received good notices it in no way indicated the way in which the young director would progress. In 1973 Lucas directed and co-wrote *American Graffiti*, still the best of the youth culture movies to come out of Hollywood.

Around this time Lucas became interested in the idea of remaking the *Flash Gordon* serials as a big budget feature. Fortunately for him the rights weren't available and Lucas set about fashioning his own script using the space fantasy milieu of the old Buster Crabbe serials as his jumping-off point, adding in ideas from such diverse fields as comics. Hollywood war movies, the odd snatch from James Bond, and a healthy chunk of Tolkien-esque fantasy.

He called his screenplay *The Star Wars* and in it told the story of Luke Starkiller, a young farmboy who becomes involved in the battle between the rebel forces and the evil, all-powerful Galactic Empire. Lucas' screenplay went through many changes while he was shopping it around the major Hollywood producers. Universal came close to taking it on, impressed by the success that *American*

Graffiti had proved for them, but they ultimately rejected it. It was Alan Ladd Jnr, then head of production at Twentieth Century-Fox, who realised the potential in Lucas' ideas and enthusiasm.

By the time the film commenced shooting in March 1976 Lucas had altered much of the content of the film. No longer was Luke Starkiller trying to rescue his brother from the Empire heavies with the aid of an aging space pirate named Han Solo but rather he became Luke Skywalker trying to rescue a beautiful princess with the help of a dashing space pirate named Solo and a Gandalf-like character called Obi Wan Kenobi. Reportedly an even earlier version had the Luke character



a female. Other changes became necessary through budgetary limitations. Luke's home planet of Tatooine was to be of the jungle variety and shooting was to take place in the Philippines, but when the logistics and costs involved were considered it was decided to turn the jungles into a desert and some arid and interesting landscapes in Tunisia fitted the bill exactly. The rest of the film was shot on the soundstages at Elstree and the special effects and miniatures were shot at a new facility in Hollywood set up by Lucas called Industrial Light and Magic.

THE CASTING

It was important to Lucas from the start that three young principals in *Star Wars* be "unknowns", in the sense that they would not be well-known star names which would hinder the kind of young audience identification he was looking for. He tested hundreds of hopefuls and finally settled on Mark Hamill for Luke Skywalker, Harrison Ford for Han Solo and Carrie Fisher for Princess Leia Organa. In a recent interview in *cinema* magazine Ford recalled, "The beauty of the film is George's ensemble casting. His second choice for the characters was three entirely different people. Not one of us and two others... It was Carrie, Mark and myself, or three other people." Ford had been in *American Graffiti* after some years as an unsuccessful young contract player at Columbia and a return to his trade of carpentry. Interestingly it is really only Ford who has managed to carve a name for himself outside of the *Star Wars* saga with roles in *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and the forthcoming Ridley Scott sf thriller *Blade Runner*.

To support these three virtually untried players, Lucas signed two of England's finest

Top: A disguised Luke (Mark Hamill) and Han (Harrison Ford) create havoc with the *Death Star* instrument panels; Above: George Lucas directs Stormtroopers on location in Tunisia. Below: A portrait of Gary Kurtz, producer and sometime photographer. Opposite page, first four pictures: The rebel forces attack the *Death Star*. This optical sequence shows the effects of a laser assault. Bottom left: A Stormtrooper surveys the surface of Tatooine. Bottom right: Han Solo, space smuggler.





continued on page 34 ➤

A movie poster for Star Wars: The Force Awakens. The top half features a large, dark, close-up of Kylo Ren's face, looking down with a menacing expression. Below his face, a bright, fiery explosion or battle scene is depicted. In the foreground, Rey is shown in a white dress, looking up at the explosion. To her left, Finn is also looking up, holding a glowing lightsaber. In the background, a large crowd of people is gathered, and a small figure of a character in a dark coat and hat is visible on the right. The overall tone is dramatic and action-packed.

A long time ago in a galaxy far

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STAR WARS

Starring MARK HAMILL HARRISON FORD
PETER CUSHING

and
ALEC GUINNESS

Written and Directed by GEORGE LUCAS Produced by GALATHEA

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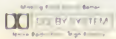


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STAR WARS





actors, Alec Guinness and Peter Cushing, to play Obi-Wan Kenobi, the wise old Jedi Knight and Grand Moff Tarkin emissary of the evil Emperor and commander of the Death Star. Originally Guinness wasn't too struck on the idea of acting in a science fiction film. In an interview at the time Guinness said, "The script held me by a certain excitement. And then I met Lucas and I was very impressed. I felt a sense of sympathy with him; he is of a new breed of film-maker, and the first of this breed to offer me a job. I found the script curious in places and I didn't understand it all but I found where his tastes lay and that he was indebted to Tolkien and that he had interest in Jung. There is a little bit of *The Lord of the Rings* in the character I play and I don't quite know what I am doing. But I trust George Lucas. I am not so interested in myself in the part but I am very interested in being in the film."

Dave Prowse, who had found some measure of fame in a forgettable Hammer turkey called *The Horror of Frankenstein* donned the elaborate costume of Darth Vader, Tarkin's henchman, and proved to be one of the most popular characters in the film.

Another tall actor, Peter Mayhew, was cast as Chewbacca the Wookiee partner of Solo. Mayhew, standing something over seven feet tall had little screen experience, though in the hairy costume and with a script that consisted of nothing more than grunts and growls this didn't prove a drawback.

THE DESIGN OF STAR WARS

To visualise and help sell his screenplay, George Lucas acquired the services of Ralph McQuarrie to render a series of paintings which would illustrate the key scenes in *Star Wars*. These would enable the production and costume designers to work together to develop the visual style of the film. McQuarrie, whose background includes work



Opposite page, top: Han Solo has a little discussion with the alien Greedo. Sequence: The destruction of an Imperial TIE fighter over the surface of the Death Star. This page, top: Luke Skywalker mans the Millennium Falcon guns. Above: Alec Guinness as Obi-Wan Kenobi.

in the technical design side of the aerospace industry as well as freelance illustration and movie poster painting, produced a series of 21 stunning paintings for Lucas. Lucas worked very closely with McQuarrie, giving explicit descriptions of Vader and C3PO in particular, from which the artist could work. It was a set of four of these paintings which Lucas showed to Fox executives.

One of *Star Wars*'s greatest assets is its superb visual design, thanks mainly due to the extraordinary talent of the late John Barry. Barry brought to *Star Wars* a clean, elegant look and in particular to the interior design of the Death Star with its sleek, highly-polished surfaces.

THE SPECIAL EFFECTS

Apart from the media phenomena that *Star Wars* has become, perhaps the most important aspect of the production and the area in which the film made the greatest breakthroughs was in the field of special effects. The effects team called together by Lucas was headed by John Dykstra in the optical department and John Stears in the mechanical effects department.

Dykstra, whose background lies in Industrial Design, had previously worked on *Silent Running* and *The Andromeda Strain* developed a new camera system to cope with the number of special effects and model shots required in *Star Wars*. Dubbed "The Dystraflex", the camera was mounted on a forty-two foot long track and was equipped with a special tilt and pan head allowing it to move into any position around the stationary models. By linking this set-up to a computer memory system, the effects man was able to repeat the exact same movements in countless shots against the blue screen. This mobility and versatility gave the *Star Wars* space battle scenes the greatest sense of pace and excitement ever seen in a science fiction

film.

It was the art and craft of John Stears which took care of the physical effects in *Star Wars*. These included all the robots, Luke's hovercar and perhaps most famously, the light sabres. In an interview at the time, Stears described the technique he used; "I devised a spinning sword. It had a lot of flat sides, some were coated with a reflective material and the other sides weren't which when spun achieved a stabbing forward motion in conjunction with a light fixed on top of the camera. This was photographed through a half-silvered mirror, on the nodal point of the camera so the full value of light was in the lens from the reflective surfaces. It didn't look much if you were an inch away from the camera eye, but through the lens it looked like how you see it on the screen."

THE ROBOTS

The two other major characters in the film are the robot stars, R2D2 and C3PO. It is the robots which initiate the action and bring Luke Skywalker into the plot. At the time of *Star Wars* release Anthony Daniels recalled how he had got the part as C3PO: "My qualifications were that I was an actor, reasonably small, reasonably good at moving around. And so I went to see him (Lucas). There were a lot of artists' impressions of the film on the walls... Now he's shy and I'm shy and that could have been difficult. But because of the pictures, we both got very excited and we talked for an hour. I read the first script three times before I could understand anything. But gradually I began to see that Threepio was a really good part. The fact that he was a robot didn't actually seem to matter very much in the script." Despite owing a lot to the robot design in *Metropolis*, C3PO thanks to Ralph

McQuarrie's draftsmanship is one of the most elegantly executed mechanical men of the movies. However playing a robot in a suit of metal, rubber and fibreglass proved extremely uncomfortable for Daniels—"First time I had it on was the scene in the desert where all the robots are in front of the Sandcrawler. Took two hours to put everything on! It was very heavy plus it had a lot of sharp corners inside. And the right leg just wouldn't close! The leg has a small door in it. You put it on and shut the door. But there just wasn't room for me inside. I had a kind of permanent scar up my leg, and it would cut into me all over."



R2D2 also had its problems. The stumpy barrel-shaped robot came in two varieties. For some scenes he was activated from inside by Kenny Baker and for others a remote controlled unit was used. Frequently the mechanics in the remote model went haywire and the robot would wander off of its own accord, or simply refuse to function at all.

THE ALIENS

Being set in "a galaxy far, far away" allowed Lucas to people *Star Wars* with a bizarre collection of creatures and aliens. The famous Cantina sequence in which Luke, the robots and Obi Wan seek the help of Solo featured some superb design and makeup work by the likes of Stuart Freeborn, Rick Baker and Ron Cobb. Though much of this was shot at Elstree, Lucas wanted more odd creatures. At the time Freeborn, who was in charge of makeup in England became ill and Lucas called in Baker and Cobb. Inserts of various monsters sitting at tables were shot in Hollywood and then cut into the footage shot in England.

Star Wars opened in America in May 1977 to an enthusiastic response. In its first week the film generated a great deal of excitement among fantasy film fans and it looked like Fox and Lucas had a success. And then *Star Wars* mania struck. Suddenly the lines waiting outside the American cinemas doubled and then tripled. Word spread that *Star Wars* was the greatest, most entertaining film ever.

People were coming out of the movie houses and joining the queue to go back and see it again and again. In some locations, the wait to see the film grew to twelve hours and extra sessions were scheduled to cope with the crowds. The last time this had happened in Hollywood memory was the opening of *Gone With the Wind*, though that film had nearly three years of careful promotional hype behind it. This made *Star Wars* all the more of a phenomenon. The film received cover stories in magazines such as



Top: Test photographs for the various character masks used in the film. Above: Luke and Ben. Opposite top: The vast hangar deck of the Death Star. Opposite centre: A Stormtrooper advances into the detention block aboard the Death Star. Opposite bottom: Luke scans the surface of Tatooine during his search for Ben Kenobi.



Newsweek and Time.

Movie collectors went mad, scrambling to get what posters and stills turned up at conventions, and then the merchandising machine went into action and before the film's first run was up, the toy and game market was flooded with gum cards, stickers, light sabres, clothing, bed linen, wallpaper, figures, plastic kits. Almost every area of the toy market had at least one *Star Wars* item in it. The collectability of such items remains unabated, and with the release of *Empire Strikes Back* even more has been added to the *Star Wars* merchandising catalogue.

To return to my opening comment regarding the real importance of *Star Wars*, one only has to look at the wealth of big fantasy films which have followed in its wake. Certainly there were some feeble attempts to emulate the look and the flash-bang-wall-plop of the original with such efforts as *Starcrash*, *The Humanoid*, *Buck Rogers*, the truly abysmal *Flash Gordon* and, most obviously, the television series *Battlestar Galactica*. It is not these direct descendants of *Star Wars*



which are important, rather it is the way *Star Wars* made Hollywood realise that there was indeed a world audience for big budget fantasy films. If 2001 had made sf marketable to a general audience, then *Star Wars* opened the minds of studios and producers to the potential size of the audience for such features.

The last two years has seen the release of some truly magnificent fantasy films which in some ways are derived from the success of *Star Wars*. It is unlikely that financing would have been forthcoming for such films as *Alien*, *Excalibur*, *Altered States*, *Time Bandits* and most notably *Raiders of the Lost Ark* had it not been for Lucas' success.

Dramatically though, *Star Wars* leaves a lot to be desired. Its simple story is at times too thin and it is really only the special effects and pace along with the solid performances of Guinness and Cushing which hold the film together. In truth, it is not *that* good a film, but its effects on the entertainment industry cannot be denied. For that fact alone, *Star Wars* stands as a landmark of the cinema.



Bond no more (and no way, except on his own unconditional control terms), Sean Connery opened the seventh American film festival at Deauville amid a growing anti-Hollywood outburst by the new French president's regime. *Outland* was the event's curtain-raiser and the craggy Scot proved the first British star to be honored at this wholly Yankee affair with a retrospective of his earlier movies.

He flew in by private jet with his French wife, Micheline, from the Pontresina locations of his current movie in Switzerland—*Maiden, Maiden*, a bittersweet love story. Ironically his director happens to be Fred Zinnemann, the man who made the terrestrial version of *Outland*, *High Noon*. In 1952. ("Yes, Fred's sean *Outland*. He enjoyed it a lot"). Sean stayed around for the weekend, got a golf game in (and just won at the last three holes) and gave freely and affably of his time to the gathered Euro-media.

In a word, he astonished the powers-that-be at Warner Brothers. They had not been ecstatic about Connery promoting *Outland*. The film is no great winner in the United States or Britain. Connery, felt Warners, was box-office poison and, hell, he never did interviews. . . hates the Press. . . only gave three interviews at his similar trip to the Edinburgh festival a few weeks before. . . and he just wasn't worth the \$15,000 expenses involved. They only okayed the visit when faced with the alternative of writer-director Patar Hyams making the trip.

As the zipalong week-end turned out, Sean Connery conquered all—Warners included. He may not have mellowed with the years but was tireless in a day's round of media raps—snapping only once or twice at asinine queries or comments. He talked about films old and new, plus 007 (see last issue), and as far as his future is concerned, when next Warners need to choose between the star or the director of a film, they'll probably still go for Connery . . . director Sean Connery that is.

Starburst: What attracted you to *Outland*?

Sean Connery: The story. The whole story. The setting of it and how it was constructed and designed and, obviously, as with any film, it had to be a viable part that I would find stimulating. To have some . . . attack at it. An added plus was it was a story set in the future and still totally understandable—to me! It worked.

And gave you the chance to be Gary Cooper in space, in *High Noon*!

(*Laugh*). I was certainly most conscious of the *High Noon* aspects when I read the script. I don't think Peter Hyams ever, in any way, tried to disguise the fact that it was based very heavily on *High Noon*. The situation, of course, is somewhat different, but the parallels and similarities are still there. What was clever, I think, was the idea of setting it in space—a frontier town. That's what appealed to me in the first place. And how, when we met, Peter imagined the production in terms of the set designs. That was another plus. Peter Hyams, who wrote the screenplay and was directing, was also heavily involved in the production design. Consequently, one was dealing with the design and dialogue at the same time when we started discussing the film. I liked his mixture of Western, science fiction, adventure and the sort of thriller where one was using computers, surveillance instruments that visually told the story. For once, the effects didn't take over the movie.

One was reasonably sure ground with the story because of the success of *High Noon*. The structure sustains itself—waiting for the villains, the involvement of the man with his wife, finding out who was at the centre of the drugs things, and how the Marshal is presented with this problem and resolves it. That's very good cinema. The fact that there is a solution (*laugh*) is, I think, quite rewarding. It's a good narrative line. And proven. So I didn't think one was going to be dwarfed by the hardware, as they all call it now, or the effects. Another protection was that it was relatively easy to understand just what the hardware was about for once.

You worked on the script, as per usual, I take it?

I work on all the scripts I film. Writing is directorial. I supply some ideas, changes in dialogue and perhaps

Deauville Tapes Part Two

SEAN



CONNERY

SEAN CONNERY ON *OUTLAND*, *TIME BANDITS*, A NEW FUTURISTIC MOVIE FROM HOLLYWOOD AND A TOUCH OF THE ARTHURIANS TO COME.

INTERVIEW BY TONY CRAWLEY



add any humour that's missing.

On all your films?

I just said on all the films—when I worked with the director before we start. That's happened more in the last ... ten years. From the moment I receive a script and get enthusiastic about it and say "Yes," the next step is to know if it's a definite offer. Because I've been caught many times where I've gotten involved and invested a lot of time and effort and realised too late that the film was not a possibility at all. Now I make it conditional that the moment I read and like the thing, and it's definite—that I go to America to meet the writer or the director, or they come to see me where I'm filming and I go into the pre-production planning with him or them.

But you could come up against a director who felt the script was his own ...

Who?

Well, you haven't met such an animal, evidently.

No.

And you wouldn't accept it if you had?

No. If you spend that much time involved in a film, and it's a response to your own emotions—and that's what you're using—it would appear to me a bit of a waste of time to be just sitting there and only delivering the lines ... Unless you had something you were working on on the side. And that digresses from the actual making of the film.

*Hitchcock being the only exception, I suppose, on *Marnie* (1964).*

There was nothing much to do with his script, it was all cut and dried. He never started a picture without it being perfect. He didn't make any changes. Also, when I was involved with *Marnie*, initially it had been written for Grace Kelly and had been around for quite a long time before he ... couldn't get her. Hitch was

reluctant to give a script to read, anyway! But there was no problem once we started.

*No, no complaints with the *Outland* script?*

My initial complaint was that it was too black-and-white. Too ... certain. Therefore, not quite as truthful as I would have liked. This character, O'Neil, was suddenly able to handle the whole problem. I wanted more kinde doubt in the part. Hyams, I think, is a

technical and first-rate director. I don't think he's in the same class as a writer. But the actual dramatic impulse and story are sufficiently dramatic to take the thrust through to the end. And, as I say, I think his ideas of incorporating the use of the hardware in such a visual, explanatory way, was very good cinema ... making a detective element which is a departure from *High Noon*.

You had a hand in the casting, didn't you?

Yes. In this case, we mutually agreed that it would be preferable to have mainly people with good faces—good types—without necessarily being very well-known. They had a certain look about them and many had beards which made them rather like Western pioneers.

Who found this great lady, Frances Sternhagen. She's no Sigourney Weaver but she makes a terrific ally?

That was Peter Hyams's idea. First of all the part was written as a man.

*Like Sigourney's in *Alien* ...*

Then, we talked about it being a woman and that seemed much better. But not to have any kind of sexual connotation. Just to make it a kind of bitchy type relationship. Then, she becomes more helpful and what have you ... But no kinda promise of riding into the sunset together. And it worked. I'd seen her only once before in a Burt Reynolds film. *Starting Over*. She was very good in that but I didn't know her well enough. I mentioned Colleen Dewhurst. But she was in a play ... and Peter was convinced Frances would be good and I agreed.

Any particular problems in shooting the movie? Shooting was different in a sense because Peter Hyams was very involved in the lighting and design. And there was one area where we hadn't been before



which was Introvision. But we have very good technicians for that in England. That's why *Star Wars*, *The Empire Strikes Back*, *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and *Outland* use these techniques and technicians. Then, we were very much aware of the difficulty of movement on the sets. . . . The floors were grid iron, similar to a ship, which apparently is how they will be—though I can't explain technically why. And so for laying camera-tracks down and things like that it is quite difficult. We had to devise other methods of tracking.

In the chase scenes you mean? How long did it take to shoot that run after the dealer?

About three days. . . . Well, it went through four sets. The main, major complex, the changing rooms, another corridor sequence and then the actual confrontation in the kitchen. We use the Panaglide camera—chep with a harness fitted on so he can run with the camera. It's all strapped to him. He has a picture he can look at, so he can see if you're in the frame. You tend to keep almost in fixed focus, because the relative distance between the camera and yourself is pretty constant—about within a foot. But it virtually meant that he was in front of you, he could run along through all the corridors and along the stairs and up the stairs and through the bedrooms. . . . I just had to run behind him.

*And into the punch-up. I gather *Outland* has been attacked for its violence. In fact many of your films are considered violent.*

I think that it's very American on concept. America is violent. Also in a situation like *Outland*, they do have a supposed code of law and order and when you bring in the element of the drugs, the result is the same as we have now. Also in that setting, which is not easy or comfortable, it's bound to be kind of tough, so it's natural. That there would be the evolution of the violence.

Can screen violence stimulate street violence?

Yes, I think it can. There's no doubt about that. But I feel it has to be seen in perspective. Violence is inherent. . . . whether it's in the cinema or wherever, it has always come out. In places where they are not

particularly geared to violent movies, you get tremendous violence. . . . in India. And you get in in Iran! It's a failing or whatever you want to call it, but it's something you accept. It's one of the reasons I'm totally against the United States-Soviet Russia kind of big and bigger stuff, because it becomes more and more unwieldy so when they do get violent, it's going to be something that's unmanageable.

You used the expression "good cinema". What is good cinema to you?

Good cinema is when I have no sense of time. And that relates to everything. If I'm totally unconscious of the time, then I prefer it.

In golf, movies, meals, interviews. . . ?

If one is absorbed and engrossed, your attention is held, your emotions keyed up.

So a message is not vital?

The message factor doesn't necessarily have to relate to the cerebral. The message can equally be conveyed by action and visuals. I don't think the written word is particularly only associated with the message.

It's been said you could be more of a star than you are—but you refused. You preferred to be an actor

INBETWEENLAND

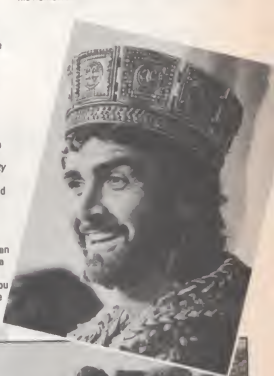
and not an ever-smiling superstar celebrity.

(He laughs). I think that's down to the individual each time, which way he chooses to go. There's a trap if you choose to have a Press representative (publicity agent) who's going to present to the world a manufactured concept of you. Then, you have to end up living the manufactured concept. That doesn't seem very intelligent to me. But also, of course, it means you make many mistakes, which I do.

Such as?

Well, I have a tendency to believe most people when they tell me something. I think this happens a lot to a lot of actors and actresses. It's a long line of experience you have to go through to learn. And you make a few mistakes. I'll give you one example, the film, *Cuba* (1979), with Dick Lester. We had made a

picture before which could be termed a mistake by some people, *Robin and Marian* (1976). It was a financial disaster! I liked it and the public didn't particularly care for it. Based on that very good working relationship with Lester, I went ahead and agreed a treatment of a screenplay for *Cuba*. What happened was that we agreed a date without having the script really in a shootable condition—a fatal error! You have to have the blueprint. You can always improve it as you go along. But, if you don't have a script that is shootable, you put yourself in a problem area across the board. I postponed the shooting twice as the script wasn't ready, then we had to start because we were running out of weather in Spain. I didn't think the script was ever ready. So it became a case of patchwork. In my opinion, Lester hadn't done his homework.



PYTHONLAND

How did you fit in with the Monty P. gang?

Oh, it was only Terry Gilliam directing *The Time Bandits*. . . . I didn't have anything to do with any of the Python people. John Cleese and Michael Palin were in other sequences. I was just in the sequence with the boy and the six dwarfs.

How did that one come up for you, anyway?

They sent me the script and said they couldn't possibly afford me to do it. I liked the story so much—and they were having problems getting set up—that I was determined to make a deal whatever way we worked it out. Then, of course, we got Ralph Richardson, David Warner, Ian Holm afterwards. A really marvellous cast.

It's still an odd choice of movie for you?

It's an extraordinary tale! I had no idea what kind of audience it would attract. But it's doing fantastically well which is terrific. Because they couldn't get the money. They couldn't start. And nobody knew what kind of future it could have. It's very nice that it's so successful. Defying all the laws!

BROOKSLAND

And your next release is just as difficult to define. And still ultra top-secret, I gather?

Wrong is Right is written and directed by Richard Brooks. I don't know if you know very much about Brooks, but he's very secretive. There's only him and I who had a script.

A rather weighty scenario, I hear.

It was 280 pages, which is very long. And he doesn't give the scripts to the actors usually. I couldn't take it any further until I read it, so he eventually he agreed. I've known Richard for many years but we've never worked together before. This went extremely well. He agreed I would assist with the cutting and reshaping of the script, which I did. So we ended up with just the two of us having scripts. As I was finished changes, I'd give the pages to him, so they wouldn't be zeroxed and sold or something. That was a very, very good working experience. We finished shooting about a month ahead of schedule.

And this is a somewhat futuristic tale as well—or have I been listening at the wrong keyholes?

It's just slightly in the future. When there's four television networks in America: CBS, ABC, NBC and... oh, I forgot... World TV or something.

And the subject?

International terrorism. I'm a journalist-reporter who has access to high echelons of power and what have you, going around the world. I'm a sort of cross between Hemingway and Barbara Walters.

You're Jane Fonda, you mean?

No, Barbara Walters, I'm afraid. (Laughs). It's a sort of satire and makes very interesting comments about the CIA, KGB and all the rest of it. I suppose the sum total of it is whereas we record everything in the newspapers and feel we're into all the information, knowing everything that's happening in the world—we're just not!

And this is Brooks' view of where we're going internationally just as **Outland** was Hyams' view of planetary life in the future?

Richard is sure that the KGB and the CIA are totally influenced by what he's written. I say that with all respect because the events he predicted in the script are startling. Various of the issues are now running parallel with his film.

FUTURELAND

So... what's next?

I'm going to sleep, I think... In fact, I was counting yesterday. I've had ten days in my own bed this year. Well, after the next sleep in the next hotel away from home, and the next golf game, what's your next movie?

I haven't fixed anything. I may do **Sir Gerweine and The Green Knight** for a young British director, Stephen Weeks.

That'll make up for missing **Excalibur**.

Playing **The Green Knight** is only like a couple of weeks. I love the story, all the Arthurian stories. I'd do that between now and the end of the year. It's about ten or twelve days, then he'll finish with me. We'll be shooting in Northern France, I think. That'll make what, about five films inside 18 months or so. You keep extremely busy. What's more important to you—the work or the success.

I think work is more important, when it's going professionally and well, it's very satisfactory and makes for a better, harmonious feeling within myself. But in some ways, work and success are partially synonymous. I have my own conception of what is successful and rightly or wrongly, I stay with it. It must have some reliability because after twenty years or something, one is still making films. (He laughs). As they say, today, although the climate now is really quite panic-stricken, one is still bankable, which means if you agree to do something, the film can be made.



Will that work ethic become directing soon?

Sure. I've directed in the theatre and some documentaries. As yet I haven't found a subject that really grabs me for features. I've worked on a couple... I'm still looking...

Write it, why not?

Hmm, yeah. If I knew what it was specifically I wanted to do I could get it down. But as anyone making movies today will tell you, the toughest part is finding original properties. The one, I think, who is more sure in knowing what his audience is today... is probably George Lucas. When he had his idea of **Star Wars**, he went ahead with it and it succeeded. He then storyboarded and worked very hard, again knowing what he was after with **The Empire Strikes Back**. Then, he went into another direction and did **Raiders**

of the **Last Ark**, which again was very tightly worked out, programmed and what have you. Very much his kind of cinema with Spielberg incorporated into it.

Lucas, I think with three pictures has probably a better track record than any two studios put together.

Have you a theme, at least, for what you'd want to direct? I mean, you've been dabbling in fantasy lately is that your direction?

I like the idea of comedy and humour—but coming out of given circumstances and situations, with the minimum dependence on writing of dialogue, so that you can visually express it and everyone can follow it. That doesn't sound like Bond, sf, fantasy, Brooks, Zimmermann... That doesn't even sound too much like Sean Connery.

No, it's... well, it's almost like farce.

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POSTER GALLERY

George Pal, whose career was covered in depth way back in *Starburst 18*, was considered by many to be the father of modern film fantasy. From his first feature-length epic, *Destination Moon*, to his last movie, the less-than-successful *Doc Savage*, his films boasted pioneering special effects and a great degree of respect for the genre. This month's Poster Gallery has been dedicated to the films of George Pal and to the memory of one of fantasy's greatest exponents, who died two years ago this month.



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GE



richard o'brien

A STARBURST INTERVIEW BY JOHN BROSAN



Richard O'Brien has a very distinctive appearance, even when he's not wearing the costumes and make-up of either Riff Raff in *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* or Cosmo McKinley in *Shock Treatment*. Totally bald, with a very slim, but not skinny, body he reminds me a bit of the Mekon from the *Dan Dare* comic strip, except he's not green... The other distinctive quality about him is his voice—it's surprisingly rich and melodious and doesn't quite match his appearance (you expect him to sound more... well, punk I suppose).

He also has an accent that is rather hard to place

and no doubt this because he was born in England but raised in New Zealand, his family having emigrated there when he was 9 years old. After leaving school at 16 he considered being a farmer for a while but decided that working as a hairdresser was not only less strenuous but also left you with clean hands at the end of the day—which farming certainly didn't. All the time, however, he was harbouring a secret ambition to see if he could turn this dream into reality.

Like all would-be actors, he had to do various stints as a dustman, record salesman, petrol station atten-

dant, van driver and pie factory worker but eventually landed a job as an assistant stage manager. Small acting parts followed and then came roles in *Hair* and *Jesus Christ Superstar* and it was during the latter period that he first met Jim Sharman, the Australian director. Later, while working in a Sharnan production at the Royal Court Theatre Upstairs O'Brien mentioned the idea of *Rocky Horror* to him and the rest is cult history.

The latest O'Brien/Sharnan production is *Shock Treatment*, a kind of sequel to the film version of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* and I recently talked to O'Brien about the film in the incongruous setting of a plush executive suite in the London headquarters of 20th Century-Fox. After admiring the expensive-looking pine-wood panelling and sinking our bodies into the soft and sensuous upholstery we got down to business:

Starburst: *Shock Treatment* is unusual in that it was shot entirely within a studio but I gather this wasn't the original plan?

Richard O'Brien: No. We were going to do location shots in downtown Dallas and in different areas around Dallas. There actually is a Denton (the town in the film) just outside of Dallas but that's not why we chose to film there. I think it was because Dallas can offer good film production servicing facilities. Anyway, we'd just selected the locations we wanted and then the screen actors guild strike struck... We had to find another way of doing it otherwise we would have lost the film altogether.

Having decided to set the whole story inside a tv studio how did the original conception of the film change?

It changed radically. At first I was a bit unsure if a major change of that nature was going to be a good thing and I didn't want it just to be a means of saving the project but after about 3 days discussion I was convinced it was a better idea than we had in the first place. Then I had to convince Michael White and John Goldstone (the producers) that even if the strike ended immediately we didn't revert to our original conception.

How did your original conception differ?

Well, it was just naturalistic in many ways—we went to Brad and Janet's home, we went to her parents' home, we went down streets... it was a much more realistic approach. But the tv theme was still an important thread throughout. When we cut to people's homes they were generally watching tv, and if we went to a bar they would be glued to the tv... Did you have much rewriting to do?

No, it was actually just a question of changing the setting—the dialogue didn't have to change very much. I think there are one or two non-sequiturs in the piece because of the rapid change and rapid development of the new approach but you'd have to be pretty much of a purist to pick them out. The songs remained the same too. I think we moved them slightly—a half a page here and there. The opening song of "Denton" was originally halfway through the piece. We were going to do a Judy Garland type number out in the street with all the people coming out of their houses and joining in; that went to the start of the film. And "Daar Blender" was actually sung in a kitchen with Brad on his hands and knees singing to all the kitchen appliances while Janet was upstairs packing his bag for him to go, but I think it worked quite well the way we did it with him singing it to the tv adverts...

Where did you shoot the film?

At the Lee Studios in Wembley. It took about 6½ weeks. It was a fast shoot because Christmas was coming up. By doing it entirely there we chopped a million dollars off our budget and it allowed us to shoot in December. Our original version would have been a bit dodgy to do at the same time of year because we had some exterior shots of a leisure centre—the leisure centre was the main setting in the original as opposed to the tv station—and we were going to use a place down in Swindon for that which had a domed roof and a swimming pool, but it would have been pretty difficult matching up exterior shots from Dallas with ones of Swindon in December. Very difficult, in fact.

Did you try and get as many of the original cast members from *The Rocky Horror Show* as possible?

Well I tried for everyone who had been connected with



the original film. Some couldn't make it because of other commitments; some didn't want to do it and some wanted too much money—they were the three main reasons why people didn't join this movie. But there are quite a few of the original *Rocky* people in *Shock Treatment*—Pet Quinn, Charles Grey, myself, Little Nell... most of the production team, and the producers, of course.

What about Tim Curry?

He was asked several times at different stages of the development of the script and at one point said he might play Farley Flavors but he wasn't sure if he could get away with playing Brad, which I think is probably true to a certain extent. But I think he ended up not doing it because the whole *Rocky* thing has become a kind of cross for him to bear as far as he's concerned. I don't quite understand this attitude because *Rocky* made him a star and took him to Hollywood but I suppose if people are continually expecting him to be that same character, Frank N. Furter, it must be a bit dodgy. I, on the other hand, am totally grateful for every advantage that *Rocky* has given me.

Who chose Jessica Harper?

Jim Sharman and Richard Hartley went across to the States and cast her, and I'm glad they got her. I think she's fabulous.

*Had you seen her in *Phantom of the Paradise*?*

I had, and I didn't actually like her in that, though I wouldn't dream of saying that to Jessica. But I didn't like the film itself very much. I thought the best sequences involved the guy who played the Phantom himself but I didn't like Paul Williams very much either. I just thought the whole thing was a bit slow and drawn-out and the music didn't make me tap my foot very much. Singer/piano-playing song writers like Paul Williams all write the same sort of things—songs like "My Way." I mean if someone sits down at a bar and starts playing that type of song it's very hard to tell if it was written by Paul Williams or Marvin Hamlisch or even Elton John when he was feeling a bit tired. I like to tap my foot, you see. I don't care how simple the music is; I don't care if it's only two chords or even one chord—as long as it makes you feel good. I think that's a prerequisite of rock and roll music, once you've got that you can start being clever...

*Do you think there is a direct link between *Rocky* and *Phantom*?*

Well, I think they must have been making the film when *Rocky* was on stage in California because there's the sequence in *Phantom* with the blond guy dancing in high heels—that seemed to me to be very *Rocky* and I've got a feeling that they must have seen the live *Rocky* show and that sequence was perhaps supposed to be a slight lampoon of it.

*I've got to admit I loved Jessica Harper in *Phantom*. I even liked her songs in that. I love her voice...*

Oh, she's got a great voice! And it's so deep. It's like a richer Helen Shapiro's—more mature, huskier, deeper, darker... a very male voice really.

And she has a very interesting, off-beat appearance. Yes, very elfin. I think she's fabulous. And I think we were so lucky to get her. She has a passive reality which is extraordinary contrasted against all those crazies around her in the movie. All the madness is going on around her and she just has this passive sort of blank reality where she's just going through this nightmare... I really think she's wonderful.

I especially liked her "Little Black" Dress number...

Hah, heh, heh...

Where was it? Oh yes, how did Barry Humphries get involved?

Jonathan Adams was going to come back and play Dr. Scott—the Bert Schnick character was going to be Dr. Scott in the first version—but he was caught up in the *Tomfoolery* show in the West End and they wouldn't let him out of his contract, which I thought was rather pig-headed of them actually. So Barry was suggested as a substitute and I thought it was a wonderful idea. And as I'd written the character as a German originally—as Dr. Scott was—it seemed that he had to stay German for some reason or other. We changed his name and once we did that we thought we might as well change his affiliation as well—so we took him out of the wheelchair and made him blind. I thought it was quite funny to have a TV games show host and quiz master who is blind, but not even really

blind—he's a fraud at that too.

I liked the sequence where you do the song "Lullaby" and pan along all the bedroom windows—Bert Schnick spends the whole night just sitting in the one position... like a robot that's been switched off.

I think that's a wonderful sequence because that song is all on one shot and the camera just tracks from window to window. There's no cut in that song at all. I think that sort of thing is terrific, like the opening shot which pans a full 360 degrees around the TV studio as the various characters make their entrance. It's a great way to get through a musical number—you've got 3 minutes of film in the camera without having to do any editing at all. One should be

able to do a whole film like that.

*Do you expect some disappointment from the *Rocky* fans who will want this film to be the same as *Rocky*?* Well, we did discuss whether or not to do a much more *Rocky* type of film which would have been closer to the "Monster Rises Again" thing but that seemed a cheap way out. I think what we've done is make another unique musical and whether people love it or hate it—well, we've done it. I think we've made a unique film and a terrific musical. If you compare our movie to any other musical that's been made recently, like *Can't Stop the Music* or *Xanadu*, (end what other musicals have there been apart from those two?) then we've made a brilliant musical end



for a fraction of the price. Only 4 million dollars... What has been the reaction in America? I think they were bewildered. I think they were expecting stockings, high heels and fishnet tights again but I've heard it's building quite well in Los Angeles and New York and hopefully it will just keep building. Reviews have been mixed. I've had the odd rave review and the odd mediocre review but I haven't had a hate one yet. No one's been vitriolic. I was on tv in the States and a woman started saying that she thought I was corrupting the youth of America with my films. I had to defend myself—not that I wanted to as I don't think there's anything in **Shock Treatment** or **Rocky** that's offensive really. I think Michael

Winner's films are offensive and obscene. **Death Wish** is probably one of the most obscene films ever made. There's a very, very shaky amoral attitude to life in that film. ... ***Ironic, wasn't it, to appear on American tv shows in order to promote a film that satirises those very same shows?*** Yes, it was a twist. The most remarkable occasion was when I went to Boston. I went to a tv studio for an 11pm programme and then I had to go back to the same studio at 5.30am the following morning and talk to a totally different person for the breakfast show—and the studio had changed completely. It now had four little sets, a front room, a garden patio etc, that

could have come straight out of **Shock Treatment**. But I don't mind doing that sort of promotion work in America as long as I don't come across those "Good Ol' Boys" types. Actually it's not the old chaps who are like that—the worst ones are sort of like 35 year old jocks with the Playboy image of life who are newscasters and have their hair just the right length, etc. That sort of chauvinistic male I find very tiring to deal with. It wears me out because you want to say "You stupid *****" but you can't, you've got to keep biting your tongue.

Do you get recognised a lot in America? Anyone who's connected with the **Rocky Horror Show** is a star in America but I don't get recognised that much. But then I did have a humped back and long blond hair in those days. I remember being in Florida 4 years ago with a mate of mine who runs a record studio here—he was wearing a **Rocky T-shirt** and some girls came screaming up to him with cameras saying "We want to take a picture of your T-shirt!" I was standing right beside him and they were taking photographs of his T-shirt. He did say to me, "Shall I...?" and I said, "No, don't you dare!" ***What do you think about the whole Rocky cult in America?***

It seems to be quite healthy. One does think about it in sociological terms but it doesn't seem to be unhealthy in any way. It has a family feel to it—an excuse for people to get together and make friends. It's just like any group thing a lot of people go through and then grow out of. I think anything that unites people for a short period of time and makes them feel together is worthwhile.

Rocky didn't take off in the same way in England. Have you any idea why not?

I think we're less prone to joining clubs in England. Also there's a much bigger population in America and if only 1% of it is crazy about something that's still a lot of people, whereas if 1% of England's population is crazy about something that's just a handful.

As I remember it Rocky wasn't exactly promoted in England.

Well, Fox at that stage used to share their distribution with Rank—it was called Fox-Rank and it was a very patriarchal little organisation indeed. The man who used to run it didn't like **Rocky** so they spent very little on promotion. About sixpence...

Has Rocky made money over the years?

Yes, it's grossed in excess of thirty million dollars, which is rather nice.

Looking back at Rocky now, what do you think of it?

I think it's a flawed movie but I still think it's a very good movie considering we did it for a very small budget—about 1½ million dollars. That isn't very much for a musical. **Tommy** was made at exactly the same time, 1974, and that cost 20 million, though Ken Russell did burn down a pier and several other things. **Rocky** has certainly had a longer life than **Tommy**...

Is it true Rocky has a different ending in America?

Yes, they've screwed all about with the ending. "Superheroes" is sometimes included but out of synch so that Brad's singing on the screen when he's finished singing on the soundtrack so you have Janet starting to sing on the screen with his voice coming over the soundtrack. It's totally screwed up. But in most of the prints I've seen going around America "Superheroes" is cut altogether—the house takes off and you cut to Charles Grey singing just the last verse of the song. I don't know why they did that, or who. It's bizarre.

What new projects have you got lined up?

Richard Hartley and I have written three songs for a movie they're doing in Australia called **The Return of Captain Invincible** which stars Alan Arkin and Christopher Lee. We've done a title song for the film, a duet for Arkin and Lee and a song for Lee at the end—a drinking song called **Singing the Booze**... And I'm going out to Australia during '82 to do a musical based on a book by an Australian thriller writer called Carter Brown for the Sydney Theatre Company. Hopefully we'll make it into a film by the end of '82 in Australia or Hollywood. It's set on the West Coast so it should be made in California and I'd like Burt Reynolds to play the lead. At the moment the title is **The Stripper**.

Good luck with it, and thank you very much.

It really is an amazing office, isn't it? I wonder what they do in here...



it's only a movie

Wasn't it thoughtful of those nice people at ITV to give us Bond fans that special stream-lined version of *Dr No* on Christmas day? It was obviously designed to be of minimal nuisance value and to enable the viewer to get back to the festivities as quickly as possible and for this I think ITV deserves a big pat on the back. Actually, though, I don't think they went quite far enough as I spotted several more scenes that could have been cut out with the others as they weren't really vital to the story. In fact, with a little clever cutting, you could probably remove *Dr No* himself from the picture without any loss to the movie. But perhaps ITV is already working towards this in preparation for the next time they screen *Dr No*. By then it should have a running time of around 25 minutes...

But seriously folks, I do think ITV have a hell of a nerve to show a movie in such a truncated version without a word of apology. You expect the early Bonds to have scissor marks around the violent scenes when they show them on tv but it's a bit much when entire sequences are removed for no other reason than to reduce the film's running time and make it easier to fit into the schedule.

Presumably the *Dr No* shown on Christmas day was an American tv print but that's no excuse. Leslie Halliwell and his merry band at ITV should ensure that the films they buy are in the most complete form available (and *Dr No* has been shown uncut before by ITV). Actually I wouldn't be surprised if ITV hadn't done the lopping themselves in this case as the biggest gap of all came suspiciously after one of their interminable commercial breaks.



starring John Brosnan

It was the point in the movie where Bond and Honey pass out from the drugged coffee in No's headquarters—after the break the ITV version showed them walking straight into No's quarters and dressed in different clothes. Missing were the scenes where No enters the bedroom and examines the sleeping Bond; the sequence where Bond and Honey dress and prepare to have dinner with No, and the shots of them walking down the corridor and entering the elevator that takes them down to his quarters.

Excuses and abject apologies on a postcard, please, ITV... But even the BBC does not escape my wrath. On New Year's Day BBC1 showed **2001: A Space Odyssey** and did something so terrible that I had to have several stiff drinks, despite a hangover that measured 9 on the Richter scale. No, they didn't cut anything out; it was what they added that so annoyed me. It was during the more panoramic space scenes when they squeezed the frame into the "letter box" shape in order to fit in the whole cinemascopic image—on several occasions some bright spark at the BBC had the brilliant idea of matting in a strip of stars across the top and bottom of the screen! This was so crudely done that in the scenes showing the giant spaceship "Discovery" the stars were clearly visible over the spaceship, thus creating the impression that Kubrick and his effects team had been incredibly careless.

Amazing, isn't it? All that money and technical skill spent to produce almost perfect special effects using meticulous matting techniques (no matte lines visible because the easy blue screen system wasn't used) and

years later some twit comes along and ruins the whole thing by deciding to add his own stars. The mind boggles. (Of course, I might be wrong in blaming the BBC; once again it could be an American tv print that's at fault.) Well, it's that time again when I hand out my awards for last year's best, and worst, genre movies. I had asked Jenny Agutter and Karen Allen along to host the ceremony but they both sent their apologies, along with very flimsy excuses but never mind, so I guess it's up to me again...

Okay, here I go with the first envelope and—gasp—it's the George Lucas Golden Bathub Award for Best SF Movie of 1981 and it goes to Ken Russell's **Altered States**! Well done, Ken... Why is it in the shape of a bathtub? Well, it's a long story. (See **Starburst 30**).

Next up is the award for Best Fantasy and I must admit this was a tricky decision as it was a toss-up between **Raiders of the Lost Ark**, **Superman 2** and **Time Bandits**. I'm afraid **Supay** is the winner by an incredibly tiny margin with **Raiders** a close second and **Time Bandits** an honourable third. Whew...

Award for Best Horror Movie goes to John Landis for **An American Werewolf in London** with **The Howling** and **The Wolfen** as the equally hairy runners-up...

The Limp Spaghetti Award for Silliest Italian Horror Movie goes to **The Beyond** while the tin-plated Irwin Allen Award for Worst Science Fiction Movie goes to Peter Hyams for **Outland**. Congratulations, Peter...

The **Zardoz** Award for this year's most pretentious fantasy goes to John Boorman for **Excalibur**. And the star of that film, Nicol

Williamson, gets the Adolfo Celi Funny Voice Award for 1981. Nice one, Nicol. You can buy me a drink in the bar later...

Most Disappointing SF Movie Award goes to John Carpenter for **Escape from New York** (let's hope his **Thing** is a big improvement...) while the Leather G-String Award for Best Sado-Masochistic Animated SF and Fantasy Movie goes to **Heavy Metal** (strangely enough, it was the only contender in this category).

Funniest Comedy Featuring Cavemen Award goes to **Caveman**, beating **History of the World Part 1** by miles (at least **Caveman** had one or two jokes that worked) and The Most Disappointing James Bond Movie of 1981 goes to Albert 'Cubby' Broccoli for **For Your Eyes Only**, needless to say.

The Nic Roeg Award for Most Intriguing and Infuriating British SF Movie with Really Sexy Bits goes to David Gladwell for his movie version of Doris Lessing's **Memoirs of a Survivor** (though I still want to know what the Great White Egg at the end was supposed to represent. An allegorical plea for free-range poultry farming perhaps?).

And finally the Herman Cohen Award for Tackiest and Cheapest Rip-off of **Alien** Not Yet Seen in London goes to the makers of **Inseminoid**, as well as our condolences to its embarrassed star Judy Geeson who ever since appearing in the film has gone around wearing sunglasses and a false moustache.

Next month: *My Close Encounter with Christopher Reeve.*



book world

Jerry Pournelle has in recent years become one of the big names in current American sf, even though his solo record as an author is indistinguishable. His prominence rests, of course, on his lucrative and successful collaborations with Larry Niven, such as *The Mote in God's Eye* and *Lucifer's Hammer*. The publication of *Janissaries* (Orbit, £1.65) gave me a first opportunity to sample Pournelle without Niven.

However much one may try to hide it, all reviewers have prejudices, and I have to admit that everything I've read about Pournelle rubs right across mine. He always comes across as a proponent of those militaristic, "manly" virtues which in my view are inimical to the continued survival of the human race. Therefore I was predisposed to dislike this novel—which is about a group of mercenaries kidnapped by a flying saucer and dumped on a distant planet—and to parade my dislike at length for your edification.

The only trouble is that *Janissaries* isn't half as bad as I feared, and indeed in most respects is a solidly-crafted and readable sf adventure story. The mercenaries in question are fighting Cuban soldiers in some African country which may or may not be Angola. They find themselves trapped and apparently doomed, when the improbable arrival of the spaceship gives them a way out. Soon enough they are in an alien base hidden beneath the lunar surface and are learning a few facts of life about the galactic situation. Earth—as often proves to be the case in such instances—is regarded as a primitive world and is in quarantine to prevent its development being tampered with. People like the mercenaries can only be contacted when there is no possibility that their disappearance will cause speculation. Humans are widespread throughout the galaxy, but not by any means in a superior role. One bunch of aliens need human mercenaries to do a job for them on another human-inhabited primitive world, and our heroes have been selected for the task. They have little real choice in the matter.

The planet they are taken to is a world of harshly-changing climate, governed by its complex orbit around three suns. It has been "seeded" in the past by kidnapped members of various human cultures, so its set-up is a mix of various bits of human history. The aliens want the mercenaries to ensure that a particular crop which only blossoms once every six hundred years during the close approach of one star is grown: it yields a drug of immense value in the wider galaxy. As you might expect, the mercenaries split up, take sides, and the ones we follow are soon hard at work introducing a bit of modern culture and technology to their new friends.

It's all familiar enough, but done with enough incidental invention and technical know-how to make it interesting. And thankfully Pournelle doesn't gloss over the unpleasantness of war (though I would still argue that to present it as an inevitable and unending aspect of human existence is in some small measure to propagandize for that state of affairs, and I note that the morality of being a mercenary in the first place goes unquestioned). Inevitably a sequel can be expected, in which the mercenaries or their descendants will get out into the galaxy to

— by John Bowles —



teach the aliens a thing or two about truth, justice and the American way. But this is a decently done professional novel, which can be recommended with a few moral qualms.

I don't need to tell any of you anything about *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, but you might need warning off the largish glossy book which calls itself the illustrated screenplay (Ballantine—my copy has no U.K. price). It certainly contains the complete screenplay by Lawrence Kasdan, but the illustrations are just storyboards for the movie. Now storyboards are interesting up to a point—they tell you just how much of the movie's "look" was in the director's mind at an early stage, but they're really quite crude sketches, and in a large-format book like this one really would have hoped for more—stills from the movie, something showing the making of it, even a Polaroid snapshot of Steven Spielberg. As it is it looks like a very rough outline for the comicstrip version. As for the script, well, it doesn't really amount to a lot on paper, because it's a movie short on dialogue and long on action. This is no criticism of Kasdan's work: he clearly understood and provided exactly what was required to make the thing work, but the heart of the film lies in Spielberg's interpretations of Kasdan's instructions for action sequences. All in all this looks like a cheap way of cashing in.

Bob Shaw is one British sf writer who can always be relied on to give value for money, and his latest collection, *A Better Mantrap* (Gollancz, £6.95) offers solid entertainment, though I'd recommend that you wait to buy the paperback and meanwhile ensure that your library has a copy. The stories are professional, ingenious and highly readable. The best of them are "Conversation" and

"Frost Animals." In the former an offshore drilling rig which freezes the surrounding sea using an teleportation device which imports the absolute zero of deep space finds itself menaced by a fearsomely predatory space being picked up by the device. It's a sort of Alien-on-an-oil-rig, but very tense. "Frost Animals" is an unusual murder mystery set in the future, and being investigated twenty years after the event, as the prime suspect has spent those two decades on a long interstellar flight.

Another death to report in the sf world: D.F. Jones, British author, died some time in mid-1981. He was in his 60s. (Hard information has been difficult to come by). STARBURST readers will know of him for his first novel, *Colossus*, which was filmed as *The Forbin Project*.

A second new British sf magazine should have appeared by the time you read this: *Extro*, which has been on the drawing board for some months but which finally seems to have progressed to the launch pad. The first issue has stories by Ian Watson, Garry Kilworth and Christopher Priest (the latter, admittedly, a reprint), interviews with Stephen Donaldson and Ian Watson, and various other stuff. It will be bi-monthly, and apparently has nationwide distribution, possibly even in W.H. Smith. It costs 75p an issue; £4.00 for 6 (one year), from *EXTRO*, 27 Cardigan Drive, Belfast BT 14 6LX.

News comes from America of a new TV sf series, designed to follow the highly-successful adaptation (yet to hit British screens) of Ursula Le Guin's *The Lathe of Heaven*. Two TV stations—WNBT in New York and KCET in Los Angeles—plan to produce thirteen one-hour adaptations of well-known sf stories, the first four being made in time for the 1982-3 series of a US public broadcasting drama programme. Two planned productions have been named: Ursula Le Guin's "Vaster than Empires and More Slow" and Algis Budrys's *Rogue Moon*. (The latter, done right, could be a knockout.) Other authors mentioned by the producers (though still in negotiation) include Arthur Clarke, Robert Heinlein, John Varley and Roger Zelazny. Now all we need to do is cross our fingers and hope that a) it all goes ahead and b) we get to see the results.

And that, I'm afraid, is about all from me. I'm about to start a publishing job which is a challenge, but which means I'm no longer free to review impartially. Someone else will have the pleasure of dissecting John Brosnan's next masterpiece. Thanks for listening.

John Bowles

STOP PRESS Another death to report, this time one which may be greeted with mixed sadness by some readers. The psychiatrist Dr Frederic Wertham died recently in New York, aged 86. Frederic who? you ask. What novels did he write? None, is the answer, but he did publish in 1953 a book called *Seduction of the Innocent* which condemned violence and sexual overtones in comic books, created a furor, and led to the introduction of the Comics Code, as well as to the death of the EC horror comics. Anyone who watched the TV documentary about Superman, repeated over Christmas, will have seen him airing his views in the course of it.

TV ZONE

With the recent, and what seems permanent, demise of BBC-tv's **Blake's 7** (the whole crew being zapped to the land of their ancestors, I gather; I have to admit I didn't actually see the final episode myself), I got around to thinking of previous tvee series that had a dramatic concluding episode, or were *never* resolved.

Actually, I dearly love the idea of a series with a continuing set of characters and a central storyline wrapping up its final show with a logical if not dramatic episode. In production terms, when such future planning is possible it introduces a whole new arena of values, especially when a series is viewed in retrospect.

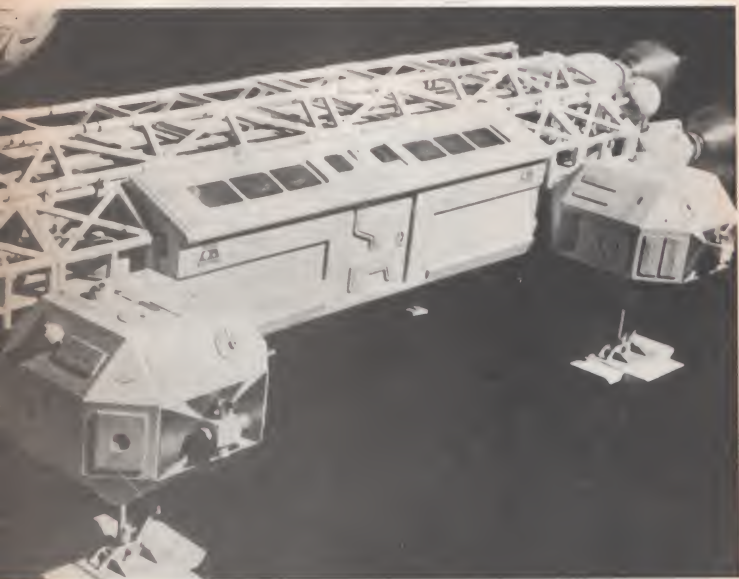
Most shows, unfortunately, leave their main characters and situation in an unresolved state of limbo. Two of the most famous examples, among tv buffs, of spectacular finales come from **The Prisoner**, which ended with Number Six finally destroying the Village and making his escape; and **The Fugitive**, where Lt Gerard (Barry Morse) killed the One-Armed Man and cleared Dr Kimball (David Janssen) of his wife's murder.

I'd be interested in hearing of other series that resolved an ongoing situation with the final episode; for instance, here are a few that immediately spring to mind: **The Odd Couple**, where Felix (Tony Randall) wrapped up the show when he re-married his ex-wife; **Nanny and the Professor**, where Nanny (Juliet Mills) ended up marrying the Professor (Richard Long); and, probably the most oddest and interesting of all, **Nichols**, where in the last episode of this turn-of-the-century western hero James Garner is shot dead—and the closing scene has his twin brother (also Garner) riding into town to avenge his death.

Sadly, most series (with particular emphasis on the American output) are cancelled and off the air so suddenly that they're forced to leave their characters and situations in a state of suspended animation. It's like Ahab postponing his pursuit of Moby Dick indefinitely. Or King Kong frozen midway up the Empire State Building.

Just for the pleasure of such frivolous thoughts, here are some situations I would have liked to have seen neatly tied up: It would have been good if the Jupiter 2 had managed to return Dr Zachary Smith (Jonathan Harris) to Earth, in **Lost in Space**; for Caine to finally locate his brother, in **Kung Fu**; Gilligan to eventually get off his island; Uncle Martin to repair his spaceship, in **My Favorite Martian**; Shenandoah to regain his memory and find his true identity, in **A Man Called Shenandoah**; Hannibal Heyes & Kid Curry to get their pardon from the governor and the posse off their back, in **Alias Smith And Jones**; Tony Newman and Doug Phillips to lock in and get back to their own time, in **The Time Tunnel**; the space-age castaways to finally return to their own, normal-size world, in **Land of the Giants**; the Moonbase Alpha colony to get back to Earth, in **Space: 1999**; Marty Hopkirk to finally have the curse lifted, in **Randall & Hopkirk (Deceased)**; Morgan and Quentin to find their long-lost sister, in **The Quest**; Mark Harris to stop worrying about where his next plankton is coming from and return to his undersea home, in **Man from Atlantis**; Logan, Jessica and Rem to find





'sanctuary' and be free of the Sandman, in **Logan's Run**.

However, on a less optimistic note, the Mr Hyde part of me would have been delighted to see... the 1928 Porter run over Jerry Van Dyke in **My Mother the Car**; David McCallum disappear forever in **The Invisible Man**; Sally Field take a crash dive in **The Flying Nun**; the Cylons zap everyone in **Battlestar Galactica** and get it over with; Kevin Brophy's wolfboy to be thrown in a dog pound in **Lucan**; some real aliens kidnap Maj Gattlin and Sgt Fitz in **Project U.F.O.**; the **Survivors** to finally drop dead of the plague; and **Adam Adamant** to turn back into a block of ice.

One of the most self-conscious series on tv has been—and continues to be—**Doctor Who**. Its careful respect for its own mythology, reintroducing themes, locations and characters is almost unique to television production. Changes in cast are carefully calculated, characters' personal histories are developed, and references to previous (seen) 'adventures' are noted and thematically used. One of **Doctor Who**'s more interesting notes, for me, is the dramatic use of recurring villains; the late Roger Delgado's The Master

was one of my all-time favourite bad-guys.

Now that I've plunged myself deep into trivia-time I'll dredge up some of the more notable recurring villains from tv's past. The **Cybernauts** (**The Avengers**), the **Fembots** (**The Bionic Woman**), **Joker**, **Catwoman**, **Penguin**, **Riddler**, **King Tut**, **Shame**, **Louie**, **Mr Freeze**, **Mad Hatter**, **Marsha**, **Egghead** (**Batman**), **Klingons**, **Romulans**, **Harry Mudd** (**Star Trek**), **Dr Loveless**, **Count Mancini** (**Wild Wild West**), **Dr Schubert** (**Man from Atlantis**), **Thrush**, **Gervaise Ravel** (**Man From U.N.C.L.E.**), **Kaos**, **Conrad Siegfried** (**Get Smart**), **Wo Fat** (**Hawaii Five-0**), **Inspector Kobick** (**Land of the Giants**), a ghostly sea captain (played by **Alfred Ryder**), **Mr Pem** (**Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea**), **Farnum B.**, **Athena** (**Lost in Space**), the **Daleks**, **Cybermen**, **The Master** & lots more (**Doctor Who**).

Come to think of it, there could have been some wonderful spin-offs. **Roger C. Carmel's** **Harry Mudd** as a series character could have been a lot of fun. **Khigh Dhiegh's** **Wo Fat** could have been an excellent **Fu Manchu**-like villain in his own show. Then again, there might have been **'The Travels of the Tribbles!'** ●

Preview by Phil Edwards

Harley Cokliss' first major feature as director has completed shooting in New Zealand. As reported in **Starburst** 37 **Battletruck** is set in the not too distant future following the great Oil Wars, when the mid-West of America (the setting of the story) is divided into self-sufficient communities

trying desperately to exist without the gooley black stuff.

Into this landscape comes Straker and his bloodthirsty followers whose possession of the **Battletruck** of the title makes them all but invincible. Straker's main squeeze is Corlie, though after one of Straker's violent raids she escapes. A band of Straker's men captures her and just as they are about to violate her

she is rescued by a mysterious, armour-clad bike rider called Hunter. Of course Straker and Hunter have a final confrontation which leaves one of them dead. No prizes for guessing who.

American-born Cokliss, who counts among his credits much television work and the award-winning **Battle of Billy's Pond** and **The Glitterball** for the Children's Film Foundation,

Main picture: The title star, the **Battletruck**. Left: Michael Beck (of **The Warriors** fame) plays Hunter. Below: Annie McEnroe is Corlie. Right: James Wainwright as Captain Straker.



as well as second unit work on **The Empire Strikes Back** says of the film, " **Battletruck** is a futuristic action adventure film but it is also about characters in a situation where the normal limits on human behaviour have broken.

"Straker can be seen as an 'evil king' and yet he is played by an obsession for Corlie which makes him almost vulnerable. Hunter

can be seen as the 'knight errant' taking up the challenge thrown down to him, and yet he tries to remain detached—staying behind the shell he has built up to protect him from all the pain he sees in the world around him. Corlie can be seen as the 'damsel in distress' and yet she is very manipulative—she knows what she wants and used other people to get it."

"After carrying these characters around in my head for five years, I was very pleased to find such a powerful cast to flesh them out. The design of the sets, vehicles, props and costumes, and Chris Menges' stunning photography all help to make **Battletruck** an epic fantasy about the World without oil."

With **Battletruck** being an American/New Zealand co-production it was required that a



large percentage of the cast be New Zealanders, though for the three main leads are played by Americans. Super-villain Straker is essayed by James Wainwright whose early credits include the **Daniel Boone** and **Jigsaw** teleseries, and several tv movies including the Theodore Sturgeon thriller **Killdozer**. Wainwright has over one hundred television appearances to his credit and

featured as the villain in two of Clint Eastwood's major movies, **Joe Kidd** and the haunting **High Plains Drifter**. For the female lead, Corlie, Cokliss chose Annie McEnroe a graduate of the University of Colorado. Following stage experience in stock companies, Ms McEnroe appeared in Oliver Stone's thriller **The Hand** alongside Michael Caine.

To play the hero of **Battletruck** Cokliss cast Michael Beck. Beck has appeared in several films and tv movies including **Holocaust**. Following this he starred as Swan in Walter Hill's controversial feature, **The Warriors**. Beck considers the character he plays in **Battletruck** as "a very complex man who believes what you see on the surface. But he's also a man of action, a warrior who likes the

Main picture: *The Battletruck destroys Hunter's cabin following orders from Captain Straker.*
Right: *Rusty is played by John Ratzenberger.* Below: *Hunter's cabin before the Battletruck got to work on it.* Bottom right: *Randy Powell plays Judd.*



smell of battle and in that sense Hunter and Straker are very much alike. There is one important difference . . . Hunter lives by a moral code."

As *Battletruck* is very much a "motorised Western" it was important that the key vehicles in the film be both distinctive and memorable. The machine of the title was particularly important to Cokliss, who worked

closely with Production Designer Kai Hawkins. As Cokliss relates: "I wanted it to reflect a realistic design philosophy for an armoured vehicle. Ultimately Kai and I came up with the faceted steel-plate look, the louvres on the windscreen and grill and the ram air scoop were used to give the machine a presence. There is almost a face there if you look at it

closely."

At 60 feet long, 11 feet high and 8½ feet wide, it is the largest motorised film prop ever to be built in New Zealand. The truck section was built on a stripped down chassis of a Canadian Pacific logging truck and then rebuilt in steel plate. The tractor unit was powered by a Cummins 335 diesel engine and Fuller Auxiliary gearbox with two-speed



gears and Rockwell direct drive differentials. Top speed capability is 65 kilometres per hour. The truck and trailer section together weighed sixteen tonne.

The trailer section was built by Mid-Canterbury Industries of Ashburton, also of steel plate. The trailer unit has pneumatically-operated side doors, and removable panels were incorporated to facilitate filming. The

units took a total of one thousand man-hours to complete; and the interiors were dressed in time for filming following the arrival of the *Battletruck* in Alexandra by Art Director Ron Highfield.

The film also features three other important pieces of hardware. Hunter's methane-powered motor bike, a homemade armoured dune buggy and a heavyweight jeep.

Battletruck looks like a promising first venture from Cokliss, whose boundless enthusiasm and knowledge of the film medium indicates that he is the first of a new crop of directors from the post Lucas/Spielberg decade.

In a forthcoming issue of *Starburst* we will be talking to Cokliss in an in-depth feature on the making of *Battletruck* ●



Top: Harley Cokliss directs Annie McEnroe during the filming of *Battletruck*. Above: Harley Cokliss discusses a set-up with his producers Lloyd Phillips and Rob Whitehouse.

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